

OUR LITTLE SUNSHINE

Baby's One Month Appointment

So isn't it amazing, all the instincts to nurture are there in you after all! The baby's pain is your pain and that smile brightens your world!

A natural protective instinct wells up in you regarding ANYONE who might not keep your baby safe. That includes us, your health care workers. So let me say that safety is our 1st concern. Safety is however compromised by the fact that little nasty bugs still exist in our not-yet-perfect world. The good news is we have protective vaccines against many bad bugs. Just to put it in perspective for you in the 1920's it was common for the pediatrician's own children to die of diphtheria because the doctor could be immune but still pass the infection on to his children!

Many infections that we immunize to are so uncommon due to our success with vaccines that some people develop an indifference to the savagery of some of these diseases. Outbreaks of measles, rubella and other diseases have recurred in communities in Great Britain and Japan when small communities had stopped immunizing their children in the 1980's. These diseases will come back quickly if we fail to protect our children with vaccines. Newer additions to vaccination schedules against hemophilus and pneumococcus have made the horrible epiglottitis a thing of the past and that sneaky pneumococcal meningitis a distant memory for guys my age! Those were horribly debilitating and often times deadly.

That said, we here at Caring Family do not jump on every vaccine bandwagon. Flu shots at 6 months are optional but not pushed by many of us here. Basically having adults vaccinated will help keep the house safe but if there are a lot of other kids your child gets exposed to, and taking time off for an illness is difficult for you, you may choose to give it to your child. A similar lukewarm reception do we give to the rotavirus vaccination. It is one of several diarrheal viruses and generally is a pretty mild illness. Proper feeding (hydration) through the illness is essential, and we can help you with that.

The varicella (chicken pox) vaccine would perhaps never have happened if the proper dose of acyclovir were used so as to allow the body to gain immunity with the disease if it was severe enough to require anti-viral medications. But now that most everyone gets the vaccine, it is nearly impossible to get the natural disease, so I am afraid I ask everyone to get that and a booster at intervals that have not been clearly defined yet.

Remember that the powers that decide what vaccines to give children are looking at saving the whole population of kids. They identify a threat (disease), calculate the damage it is causing both with severe illness and death, and calculate the cost and potential harm of different vaccinations and when they find a very safe and effective vaccine start giving it. Of course you want a vaccine that is 100% safe, but not giving a vaccine is nowhere near 100% safe! So because we can't get something for nothing, we do have a very tiny risk any time we take something. That's similar to an antibiotic to save you from a bad illness can have a rare side effect that can be really bad. But tons of

time tears and money are spent to prove the overwhelming benefit of vaccines (vs. not giving them!!).

For a long time many people had concerns about autism coming from vaccines, but these concerns were fueled from fraudulent reports. Many studies have proven that vaccines do not cause autism.

Many people have information from the Internet about giving shots one at a time instead of in combined injections. This has positively no scientific foot to stand on!! In fact we have worked for years to minimize the amount of shots we have to give infants, carefully studying which shots can be given at the same time and have no adverse effect and still be effective. This allows us to give fewer shots and require of the parents fewer visits to the pediatrician (or health department). This is fantastic! Trying to get individual shots to appease someone's falsified or unproven hypotheses on shots is simply not on our agenda.

Of course the most fantastic improvement in vaccines happened in the 1990's when an acellular pertussis vaccine replaced the whole cell vaccine. The old-fashioned whole cell pertussis vaccine was horrible for about one in 10 kids. I would have a worried parent on the phone every week. Now with the acellular vaccine such horrible screaming after the vaccine almost never happens.

Diphtheria was a bad disease of the throat that could cause severe and permanent heart damage. Pertussis is a coughing (whooping) disease that is particularly severe, even causing death in the youngest infants, which is why we push to get the vaccine early. Of course the earlier a vaccine is given, the less effective it is and extra dosages must be given. Tetanus is lockjaw and will always be a threat because the spores can live in the soil, which is why even as adults we need to get a booster every 10 years. Polio is famous for causing paralysis, though the next generation might not know of it as most of those with paralysis are in their 70's now (2017) and FDR's polio might not be remembered in light of all the other accomplishments of that president. We had hoped to be done with polio vaccination (as we were able to stop smallpox vaccination in the 1960's), but little outbreaks keep popping up in other parts of the world, not to mention the fear of biologic warfare! 1200 cases occurred worldwide in 2010, so expect to see that vaccination on the schedule a bit longer!

Hepatitis B infects 200,000 people a year in the US. Protecting every baby will make this disease part of history books. Many who get the disease stay infected for life and others have complete liver failure, with the only hope for survival if they get a liver transplant. Most cases are



acquired intimately or illicitly, but some just happen with no known risks. The good news is that no boosters are needed later in life.

Prevnar is a pneumococcal vaccination. Originally it just was to prevent meningitis and pneumonia, but it also seems to lessen the number of ear infections from this bacteria. The bacteria will still be around, and we may need to change the vaccination from time to time as the “variety” may change from year to year. But we are happy to have less chronic ear infections and less catastrophic pneumococcal infections.

HIB is a vaccine against Hemophilus influenza B bacteria. Protecting against meningitis, pneumonia, ear infections and epiglottitis, we are happy to have less chronic ear problems and no more drooling infants in the emergency room in need of urgent tracheotomies.

That covers all the vaccines we strongly recommend in the first year. It's really not that bad. Consider that probably every week your baby will get exposed to some nasty bug or virus or bacteria and have to develop some kind of protective immunity to save themselves! Keeping your baby in a glass bubble would not be healthy. In fact, a study on asthma that surprised us in the late 90's found that dustier dirtier bedrooms housed more kids with healthy lungs than spotlessly clean bedrooms. The cleaner rooms made for weaker lungs.

So our best advice for the shots is “go for it!” If we can't protect your child with our vaccine schedule, we want you to find care elsewhere. Don't read all that Internet crap, and protect your baby with lots of prayer!

Hopefully your baby is beginning to find a routine that is agreeable with your lifestyles. If you are being tyrannized by an intolerable sleep schedule ask us for the “sleeping through the night” handout, claimed to be 100% effective. Spoiling is great. But done properly the baby spoils you back with reasonably good behavior and habits. You teach baby. Baby learns from you. Everybody happy!

A lot of parents worry about the baby struggling with bowel movements. Most of the worry is unnecessary. If stools are soft [or at least not so hard that you can throw at the wall and it bounces] then no problem should exist. Your baby may grunt and strain and turn red in the face and cry sometimes a few hours. If you start to interfere by putting things in the butt then the baby will think that the bowel movements are your problem, when truly this is baby's job. Baby just has three jobs, eat, sleep and poop. Don't worry if it takes a little time to get it right. Swollen bellies or jelly-like red blood in the stool concern us, so call if these things are noticed.

No solid foods yet. Expect to see thrush sometime. That is a white coating on the tongue and inside cheeks. It is caused by candida and every baby must get this and fight it. It takes 10 days to fight it however, as the body takes that long to build immunity. If you use the medicine (direct marketed to parents) then your baby will get it over and over because he will never develop immunity to it. The medicine also makes a lot of babies sick to their stomach.

Colds are bound to happen. If one happens, use steam, saline nose drops. Sometimes I sit baby up in a car seat in the house for bedtime so the secretions can drain. Otherwise I might need to use the saline nose drops every hour. No cold medicines are appropriate for a baby. If you are worried we can check baby out.

Diaper rashes may occur or may be from an allergy to a new diaper. Domeboro solution is a great preventative astringent. Ask your pharmacist where it is, and mix some up in a water bottle and soak baby's bottom with it after most diaper changes (then rinse). Check out our “Skin care” handout on the web.

If you have to go back to work and are worried about breast-feeding, realize that some mothers nurse their child just in the morning and in the evening. It is nice to keep that bond going if it is mutually satisfying. Limit baby to 10 or 15 minutes a side so you don't get sore.

Vitamin supplementation is not needed for most kids. Healthy moms make healthy breast milk. Sunshine makes Vitamin D. Iron is in a better form in breast milk and we almost never see anemia from lack of iron in breast fed babies. Moms get your orange juice every day.

Bottles need to be held by mom or dad or helper, not propped up. Feeding is a process, not to be hurried. Talk to your baby or say a quiet prayer or sing while feeding. These are precious times for you to bond and get to appreciate your baby's individuality. Don't let them be lost in the busyness of your day.

After a feed it is common to sleep. But if we let the formula sit in the mouth while sleeping, that will be a problem when teeth come in. Remove bottle from baby's mouth when they fall asleep, dental (nursing) caries happens by sucking on a bottle while asleep.

Expect to be tired. Expect friends to want to help. Expect to be afraid to trust anyone with baby. Trust them anyway. Fight for your mental sanity by doing a few nice things for yourself each week. Dads- take blocks of time and give mom a break. Explore. Use an infant carrier and go to your favorite fishing hole or store or friend and relax with baby in tow. Take pictures of your friends playing with your new baby.

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