In this letter you’ll find helpful resources and learn about:

- When to schedule your baby’s next well-child visit.
- The vaccines your newborn will need and how they protect him or her from serious diseases.
- How to protect your baby from whooping cough.
- Breastmilk and formula.
- Interacting with your baby to help him or her learn.

• How to find quality child care.
• How to take care of yourself so you can take care of your baby.
• Recognizing postpartum depression.
• How to protect your baby from scald burns.
• Reducing your baby’s risk of SIDS.
• Car safety.

Happy reading!

Well-Child Visits

Your baby’s checkups are important

Regular visits to the doctor help keep your baby healthy and you informed. Your baby needs regular checkups during the first year. The next one will be when he or she is about two months old. Checkups are a good time to ask questions about vaccines, feeding, sleep, growth and development, and your baby’s care. It’s also important to get your baby’s vision checked. Talk to your baby’s doctor about vision screening at every visit. Was your baby’s hearing screened at birth? Check with your baby’s doctor if you’re not sure. It’s important to find hearing problems early. Go to doh.wa.gov/EarlyHearingLoss for information about newborn hearing screening.

Bring your baby’s Lifetime Immunization Record and Childhood Health Record to every visit. Your first Child Profile mailing included these booklets. If you didn’t get them or need more copies, call 1-866-397-0337 or email immunematertials@doh.wa.gov.

If you need information on how to find affordable health insurance, call the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588 or visit ParentHelp123.org.

Immunizations

Babies need immunizations

Vaccines help protect your baby from serious, sometimes deadly diseases. At two months, your baby will likely get these vaccines:

- Hepatitis B (HepB)
- Rotavirus (RV)
- Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (DTaP)—learn more about this vaccine later in this letter
- Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)
- Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV)
- Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV)

Before your baby is immunized, you’ll get a Vaccine Information Statement that describes the vaccine, the disease it prevents, and any possible vaccine side effects. Record all vaccines in your baby’s Lifetime Immunization Record. To view your and your family’s immunizations online visit wa.myir.net. Also, check with your baby’s doctor to make sure his or her immunizations are in the Washington State Immunization Information System. It helps healthcare providers keep track of immunization records. It also makes sure records are complete in case you change providers and when your child starts child care, school, or camp.

Pertussis (whooping cough) is serious for babies

Whooping cough is a respiratory illness that spreads easily by coughing, sneezing, and talking. It can cause coughing spells in older children and adults. More than half of all babies under one who get whooping cough must be hospitalized. Nine out of ten whooping cough deaths occur in babies under six months. Babies with whooping cough often can’t cough and have problems feeding and may stop breathing and turn blue. Whooping cough may cause pneumonia, seizures, brain damage, and death in babies.

Most babies with whooping cough get it from their parents, siblings, grandparents, or other caregivers who have the disease but may not know it. A mother who gets Tdap vaccine early during the third trimester of pregnancy gives direct protection to her baby for the first few months of life. Here are some tips for added protection:

- Make sure your baby gets five doses of DTaP vaccine on time for continued protection against whooping cough.
- Keep your baby away from anyone with a cough, cold, or signs of illness.
- Surround your baby with a “cocoon” of protection.

Make sure everyone in close contact with your baby is up-to-date with their whooping cough vaccine. Everyone seven years and older needs a dose of Tdap vaccine. Visit doh.wa.gov/WhoopingCough for more information.

Immunization Word Search

Find the vaccine-preventable diseases your baby will be protected from after getting immunized at his or her next well-child visit:

- Hepatitis B
- Rotavirus
- Diphtheria
- Tetanus
- Pertussis
- Hib
- Poliovirus
- Poliovirus type b
- Pnemococcal

Nutrition and Physical Activity

Breastmilk and formula

Breastfeeding isn’t a substitute for vaccinating your baby, but it is a powerful way to help fight infection and mild illness. If you breastfeed, keep up the great work. Your baby only needs breastmilk at this time. If you have questions about breastfeeding, talk to your doctor or call the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588 (711 TTY relay). If you’re using formula, follow the directions on the can or ask your provider about proper mixing and storage. Breastmilk or formula provides all the nutrition a baby needs at this age. Before feeding your baby, wash your hands well with plain soap and water. Be sure you wash your hands after changing your baby’s diaper, too. Be sure everyone who cares for your baby washes their hands often.

Growth and Development

Babies begin learning as soon as they are born

You help your baby’s brain develop when you give him or her lots of attention. For more information on how to help your baby learn and grow, see the “Watch and Help Me Grow...” brochure in this mailing.

Child Care and School Readiness

Searching for infant child care

If you plan to return to work or school, start looking for child care now. Look for people who enjoy caring for babies and have training in infant care. Ask friends about child care they have used. Visit a few places before you decide. If you breastfeed, ask how the child care provider supports it. Try to visit your first choice several times. For information about finding child care, go to dcfy.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-childcare/find-child-care.
Family Support and Routines

Breastfeeding at work or school
New laws protect a woman’s right to express breastmilk in public. To learn more about these rights and to find other helpful information, see the “Feeding Your Baby, Birth to 6 Months” brochure in this mailing.

Mom: Take care of yourself, too
You and your family are your child’s first and most important teachers. Learn how to take care of yourself so you can take care of your child. Here are some tips:

• Go to your six-week checkup. This may be earlier if you had a C-section.
• Talk to your doctor or nurse about the best birth control options for you. Use birth control every time you have sex after giving birth, even if you breastfeed.
• Take a daily multivitamin for women that has folic acid.
• Sleep when your baby sleeps. Take a little time for yourself when you feel overwhelmed.
• Keep up-to-date with your immunizations, including the Tdap vaccine during pregnancy and a yearly flu shot.

Recognize postpartum depression
Many women feel emotional ups and downs in the first few weeks after giving birth. Postpartum depression can start anytime during the first year after the birth of your baby. If you continue to feel sad, very irritable, uninterested in your baby or the world around you, or have trouble concentrating or thinking clearly, talk to your doctor or call Perinatal Support Washington at 1-888-404-7763.

Safety

Baby’s skin burns easily—treat it with care!
Your baby’s skin burns easier than yours. Hot liquids can cause scald burns. Here are some tips to help avoid burns:

• Turn down your water heater thermostat to 120°.
• Test the bath water with your elbow to make sure it’s lukewarm, not hot.
• Don’t drink hot liquids, such as coffee or tea, while your baby is in your arms or lap.
• Heat bottles in a pan of hot water, not a microwave.
• Check the temperature on your inner wrist.

Learn how to prevent scalds and burns at bit.ly/2GhGQSY.

Keep your baby safe while asleep
Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the unexplained death, usually during sleep, of a seemingly healthy baby less than a year old. There is no warning and often we don’t know why the baby died. Sometimes babies die from accidental suffocation or smothering while they sleep. Create a safe sleep space for your baby to reduce the risk of SIDS and accidental suffocation.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends the following steps to create a safe sleep zone for your baby:

• Place your baby on his or her back to sleep at night and for naps. If you swaddle your baby, make sure he or she is put to sleep on his or her back. Stop swaddling when your baby is old enough to try rolling over.
• Give your baby “tummy time” when awake and watched by an adult.
• Keep your baby warm but not hot. Dress him or her warm enough to sleep without covers. A light sleep sack works great.
• Keep blankets, pillows, bumper pads, and toys out of the crib. Baby’s bed should be a firm crib mattress and fitted sheet.
• Never put your baby on a water bed, heated bed, air mattress, or a mattress that doesn’t fit the bed.
• Don’t allow people to smoke or vape around your baby. The risk of SIDS is higher for babies whose mothers smoked while pregnant. Babies exposed to cigarette or e-cigarette smoke may also be at higher risk of SIDS. For help quitting smoking, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or visit quitline.com.
• Breastfeed to help reduce your baby’s risk of SIDS.

The AAP and the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends keeping your baby’s sleep area in your bedroom for at least the first six months. Place your baby’s crib, bassinet, or portable crib close to your bed. Babies should NOT sleep in your bed. Tell everyone who cares for your baby about safe sleep. For more information, call the Northwest Infant Survival & SIDS Alliance at 1-800-533-0376 or visit nwsids.org.

Buckle up your baby on every ride
Make sure your baby is always buckled up safely in the backseat of your vehicle. A baby riding in the front seat can be fatally injured by a passenger-side air bag. If you must place your baby in the front seat, only do so with the air bag turned off. Make sure the car seat faces the rear of the vehicle until at least age two and as long as your seat will allow. Follow the car seat directions and read the vehicle owner’s manual.

If you have an old or used car seat, there may be hidden dangers. If you have concerns, contact Washington’s Child Passenger Safety Program at 360-725-9860. Visit safercar.gov/parents to find the nearest car seat inspection service.

References

• Newborn hearing screening: doh.wa.gov/EarlyHearingLoss
• Order immunization materials: 1-800-322-2588 or immunematerials@doh.wa.gov
• Affordable health insurance: Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588 (711 TTY relay) or ParentHelp123.org
• Online immunization records: wa.mijr.net
• Whooping cough information: doh.wa.gov/WhoopingCough
• Breastfeeding questions: Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588 (711 TTY relay) or ParentHelp123.org
• Find child care: dcfy.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-childcare/find-child-care
• Perinatal Support Washington: 1-888-404-7763 and perinatalsupport.org
• Burn prevention: bit.ly/2GhGQSY
• Tobacco Quitline: 1-800-784-8669 and quitline.com
• SIDS information: 1-800-533-0376 and nwsids.org
• Car seat safety: 360-725-9860 and safercar.gov/parents

Thanks for reading! Share this letter with other caregivers in your child’s life. You’ll hear from us again before your baby is three months old with information on how to:

• Prepare for your baby’s four-month check up.
• Prevent your baby from getting a flat head.
• Make a plan when your baby cries.
• Prevent choking.

For the Health of All Our Children
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This letter is available in other formats. Call the Family Health Hotline at 1-800-322-2588 (711 TTY relay).