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**The Brain And Physical Development Of A One-month Old Baby**

**By Adwina Jackson**

Your days have become so much brighter ever since your baby comes. His cries are surrounding the house, but they give a feeling of happiness. Everyone in the family is in the joy.

If you are a first-time parent, you must be thinking so much about how your baby will develop. How fast will he grow? How much does he eat/drink your milk? Or how long does he sleep in these early days of his life?

Those questions will be answered below. But before you read the part of physical development, it's best if you take some time to read about his brain development. You will be surprised that a baby's brain can grow incredibly fast and that it holds a very important role in a baby's life.

Enjoy the reading!

\* Brain Development

You probably have thought that a baby's brain develops right after he is born. You're incorrect. Surprisingly, a baby's brain starts growing immediately after a conception. By the time a baby is born, his brain has already undergone a major amount of development, though it is still in a developmental progress.

· Brain volume Talking about the volume, a newborn baby's brain is about one-fourth the size and weight of an adult brain. Consisting of about 100 billion nerve cells or neurons at the time of birth, the number is what a baby will have all his life.

· Brain parts

At the time of birth, the lower portions of the brain (the spinal cord and the brain stem) are already developed. The roles of these areas are:

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- controlling basic life functions, such as breathing, blood pressure, heart rate, and REM (rapid eye movement) sleep.
- controlling all inborn reflexes (crying, startling, and suckling).
- responsible for baby's emotions, especially anxiety or calming down.

Meanwhile, the higher portions of the brain (cerebral cortex and the limbic system) are rather immature at the time of birth. They still need to go a long way of developmental process. All of the neurons in these regions are weakly connected.

Most of these connections are created after birth. Cerebral cortex is the highest and most recently evolved part of the brain, responsible for all of our conscious thoughts, feelings, memories, and voluntary actions. As the connections between cerebral cortex are formed, a baby receives many mental milestones, such as color vision, a pincer grasp, or a strong attachment to his parents.

Enhancing the development of these connections is important. It, without doubt, depends on the amount of interaction between you and your baby. Communicating with him is the most important way you can help your baby. You need to talk and sing to him, play with him, kiss him and hug him. You must create an environment that is rich in stimulation, comfort, and loving attention. Why so? Because it will significantly enhance the development of your baby's growth and intelligence.

Newborn babies might have some ability to remember because of the hippocampus. This important structure lies deep within the brain, below the cerebral cortex, that aids your baby's development - it helps control memory.

Then, the occipital lobe, which is located near the back of the head, controls vision and visual recognition. This part is fully developed at the age of 8 months.

Last but not least, located near the crown of the head, the parietal lobe of the brain controls taste, touch, the ability to recognize objects, hand-eye coordination, and some visual recognition. This area of the brain is fairly developed in a newborn. Environmental stimulation is significant for its further development.

### \* Physical Development

The growth of a baby is highest during his first year, particularly in the initial months. A baby usually doubles his birth weight within the first 4 months and triples the birth weight by 1 year of age. The process of learning also begins soon after birth and the baby achieves numerous physical milestones in the first month.

· Growth and appearance By the middle of the first month, your baby will gain about one and a half to two pounds (about 14–28gm (½ – 1oz) per day) and grow about 2.5 – 3.7cm (1 – 1½ inch). Your healthcare provider takes these measurements at her well child visits and plots the numbers on percentile curves. These charts help determine if she is growing at normal and expected rate.

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Your baby's head will probably grow an average of 1.25–1.5 cm in diameter during the first month. The increase in size of the head allows room for her brain, which is growing and developing. Her legs will start to straighten from inward-curved position present at her birth time. Her fingers also begin to relax their tight-fisted newborn grasp.

- Baby's eyes can track objects now During the first days of life, babies can focus only on objects 8 to 15 inches away. By the end of the first month, most babies can focus on objects about three feet far from them.
- Baby's hearing sense in first month Your baby will begin to recognize your voice and will respond by turning her head towards the sound, by producing throaty sounds and by movement of arms and legs.
- Can recognize certain smells Your baby will be able to recognize certain smells in her first month, e.g., the smell of your breast milk.
- Can soothe her Your baby will learn to soothe him by sucking his thumb. In fact, he learnt to suck even before birth. Prenatal ultrasounds often catch the view of babies sucking their thumb or fingers.
- Feeding The stomach of a newborn has a room for less than ¼ cup. Since babies can eat very little

at one time, they will want to be fed every 2 to 3 hours in the day and may sleep 3–4 hours between nighttime feedings. The feeding and sleep pattern of newborns is irregular and it may take about three months for them to follow a regular schedule. Most babies may spit up soon after feeding, as their cardiac sphincter valve at the top of the stomach is not fully developed yet.

- Sleep Your baby will generally sleep more than 15 hours and will usually take short naps. He will probably wake up three or more times during the night until he settles into a pattern. You will find him spontaneously and unselectively smiling during the sleep.

Adwina Jackson is a working mother of a gorgeous young boy. Join her guides about Newborn Guide at

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parenting stories and tips on:

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### **Visiting With The Pediatrician - What To Expect**

**By Sarah Veda**

## The Brain And Physical Development Of A One-month Old Baby

In the first year of your baby's life, you will be visiting your pediatrician about every other month, for well check ups and immunizations. Here's a rundown of how those visits go, and approximately how often you'll need to visit.

**Two week visit** Some doctors schedule a visit earlier than two weeks, but most pediatricians begin at the two week mark. Your baby's weight, length and head circumference will be measured, and you can expect this at every well baby checkup during this first year. They will also do a general exam and check the baby's fontanel. One thing the doctor particularly interested in at this checkup is baby's weight gain. Your baby will typically lose some weight right after birth, so at this checkup the doctor will want to ensure that baby is gaining back the lost weight. They will also ask about eating habits, how often the baby is producing wet and dirty diapers, and about how the baby is sleeping.

**One month visit** This visit will be largely the same as the previous visit, focusing on baby's development, and on yours and baby's adjustment at home.

**Two month visit** Baby will be checked again, and immunizations will usually start at the two month mark. The first dose of the DPT - (diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis) vaccine is usually administered at this visit. For more information about when immunizations are administered, see the chapter on this subject.

>From this point on, you can expect well baby visits every other month, until your baby is a year old. There will routine physical exams, and questions about your baby's development. For the first year of life, the baby will receive immunizations at nearly every visit. These visits are not only important opportunities for the doctor to check on your baby's progress, but are also opportunities for you to ask questions and gain reassurance about how things are going, so take advantage. For instance, if you are concerned that your child has not reached a development milestone, these visits are a good time to discuss this with your doctor. Your doctor will also be looking for these development milestones, and will alert you if there is an issue. It's helpful to write your questions down as you think of them, so you don't forget.

In addition, be sure to discuss your doctor's preferences on calling when your child is sick. For example, is there a 24 hour on-call nursing service for questions? Or, is the on call only for emergencies. Your relationship with your pediatrician is critical to maintaining your child's health and your peace of mind. Don't hesitate to ask questions, and call on your doctor as often as needed to ensure your comfort.

Sarah is a 41 year old wife and mother of two boys and one girl. She spent many years as a manager in the corporate world, and gave it up to be a stay at home mom. Go to

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