



# COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

*Bringing the University to You*

## Fact Sheet -98-85



Congratulations  
on Your  
Baby!



Now that your baby is here...

Are lots of folks giving you all kinds of ideas about what you should be doing? Are different people telling you different things? Do you feel confused?

It may help if you remember that each year we learn more and more about how to help babies be healthy. But some people aren't aware of the new information. We have put together this list for you to share with your friends and family. We know that these ideas may differ from those you have heard or followed. In most cases, the old advice would not be too harmful, but we know you want the best for your baby.

Discuss these changes with those closest to you so you can have the healthiest baby possible.

### My, how things have changed!

Remember when...	Today...
Parents were told to put babies down to sleep on their stomach.	Parents are now told to put babies down to sleep on their back or side.
Breastfeeding was not encouraged. Injections were given to mothers to stop making milk.	Breastfeeding is now considered essential for newborns to protect them from infections and to promote growth and development.
Babies were given home prepared mixtures made from evaporated milk and corn syrup. These did not contain adequate amounts of vitamins and iron.	Commercially prepared, iron-fortified infant formulas are the only nutritionally adequate alternative to breast milk. But these do not contain any of the protective factors found in breast milk.
Because evaporated milk formulas were not adequate for babies, solid foods were given to infants at one month of age. This was like force-feeding because babies always pushed the food out of their mouths with their tongues..	Solid foods are not fed until the infants have developed enough so that their digestive tracts can handle the food, the tongue thrust reflex has disappeared, they can hold up their heads, and they show an interest in the food. This occurs sometime between 4-6 months of age

Because evaporated milk formulas were not adequate, babies were fed juice from a bottle starting about two months of age.	Juices are offered only from a cup beginning no sooner than 6 months of age.
Infants were given a vaccine to prevent smallpox.	Smallpox vaccinations are no longer given.
Babies were vaccinated against diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus (DPT) and polio.	Babies are now also vaccinated against other diseases including some types of hepatitis, and even chickenpox.
Fluoride drops were given to infants by the second month of age.	Fluoride drops are given after 6 months of age only if your water is not fluoridated.
Parents were careful to keep themselves, their babies and their homes clean.	Parents still need to be careful and clean to prevent infections and illnesses.
Parents couldn't get babies to sleep through the night or walk before they were ready.	Parents still can't "speed up" babies' development including when they are ready to walk or eat.
Parents did the best they could raising their children based on what was known at that time.	Parents still do the best they can-but now they do things differently because they know more. We can guess that in the future, these recommendations will change as new information is learned.

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Prepared by  
 Madeleine Sigman-Grant, Ph.D., R.D.  
 Maternal/Child Health Specialist  
 Illustration by Angela Tate

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