

Growth and Your 1-3 Month

What a time of wonder these first few months are! From a sleeping and eating machine to a smiling, responsive infant, your baby will grow by leaps and bounds in many ways, including physically.

How much should my baby grow?

After losing some of her birth weight during the first few days of life, your baby will be starting to grow steadily. By the middle of her first month, she will probably be gaining about 0.5 to 1 ounce per day. After the first month, weight gain may average 1.5 to 2 pounds and length may increase 1 to 1.5 inches per month. These are just averages; as long as your baby is staying on her own growth curve, you should have no concerns about her progress. Your pediatrician will measure her weight, length, and head circumference and plot your baby's own growth path on a chart, so any growth problems can be spotted early.

Should I be concerned?

If your 1-3 month old is not growing at an average rate, or her own personal growth rate slows, your doctor will want to make sure she's eating enough and absorbing enough of what she's eating. Your doctor may want to know the following, among other things:

- How many feedings a day your baby gets
- How much your baby eats at each feeding
- How long a breast-feeding baby nurses at each feeding
- How many bowel movements your baby has each day, and their volume and consistency
- How often your baby urinates

Most of the time, baby's progress will simply be tracked over the next few months. But if your pediatrician detects a problem, he or she may recommend that you increase the number of feedings, or the amount fed at each feeding. In rare cases, there may be a physical reason for slow growth; these cases are investigated with special testing.

Another way to track your infant's growth is to watch her progress in other areas. For example, it's reassuring if your baby is reaching developmental milestones at about the average age. If at any time you have concerns about your baby's growth, or if she seems especially listless or unresponsive, call your doctor immediately.

Premature babies may be weighed weekly to make sure they are growing properly. Preemies should not be compared with full-term babies as they grow. They have some catching up to do!

What's next?

Some doctors recommend that hungry babies be started on solids at four months. After the first few months, your baby may need more energy, and therefore more calories, to keep growing.