

Your baby in the hospital (6 to 18 months old)



Your baby may show changes in behavior during and after their hospital stay. As a parent, these changes may concern you. Please know that some changes are normal and almost always go away with time.

The changes listed below are normal behaviors for this age group. You may also see a behavior your baby has already “outgrown” come back. These changes can be how your baby reacts to stress.

Common baby behaviors

Your baby may have one or more of these:

- Changes in sleeping
- Changes in feeding or eating
- Fear of strangers
- Fear of parents leaving
- May get upset when parents leave
- Gets upset when they feel you are stressed
- Gets clingy

What can I do to help my baby?

Here are some tips that may help you and your baby.

Help them with hospital routines

- Know you are the best person to comfort your baby. Hug, cuddle and hold your baby when possible.
- Keep your baby’s routines as normal as possible.
- Ask staff to “group” procedures. This gives your baby more time for rest and healing.
- Explain what is happening with simple words. This helps to soothe them. Say “all done” or “all finished” to help your baby calm down after a procedure.

Help them feel secure

- Your baby may get upset when a stranger comes in their room. They may be fearful of pain or discomfort. Keep their crib a place of rest to help them with both emotional and physical healing.
- Limit the number of bedside visitors. Babies need time to adjust to each new person.
- Give them security objects from home such as a blanket, pacifier, stuffed animal or family picture.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Your baby in the hospital (6 to 18 months old), continued

Help them develop

- Give your baby a chance to crawl and discover their surroundings. This helps with normal development.
- Your baby needs a chance to play and explore (both during and after their hospital stay). This can help them express their feelings.

Remember that changes in behaviors are common and most often go away. This is your baby's way of trying to cope with their hospital stay. Please talk with your baby's nurse, doctor or child life specialist. If you have concerns or questions before you leave the hospital,

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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