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The English language has several terms for children between the ages of birth and 4 years, including "newborn," "infant," "baby," and "toddler." These words are often used interchangeably, and they may mean different things to different people. In general, these terms refer to different ages and stages of early childhood. So what age is considered a newborn? What age is a toddler? How about babies and infants? Here, we explore these terms and their defined age ranges, along with an overview of the growth and development you can expect during each stage. Though the terms "newborn," "infant," "baby," and even "toddler" are frequently used synonymously, the exact definition depends on the source you consult. To make matters even less clear, there's some overlap between the most commonly accepted definitions of these stages. Newborn usually refers to a baby from birth up to 2 or 3 months of age. Infant can refer to children anywhere from birth to 1 year old. Toddler usually refers to a child who is 1 to 3 years old. Baby is an informal term that can technically refer to any child from birth to 4 years old, though it's most commonly used to refer to young children before they reach the toddler stage. Confused? You're not alone. Here's a breakdown of these ages and stages. For clinical care, the World Health Organization (WHO) and American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) both define a newborn, or neonate, as a child who is 28 days old or younger. Informally, however, many consider newborns to be babies within their first 2 or 3 months of life. By 2 months after their delivery date (or their due date for preemies), babies are often: Starting to make sounds other than cryingCalmng down when you pick them upReacting to loud soundsWatching you as you moveMoving both arms and legsSeparating their hands brieflyLifting their head when placed on the tummy Note that a baby's developmental age corresponds with their expected due date, not their delivery date. So a baby who is born prematurely ("preemie") might take a little more time to meet milestones than full-term baby born on the same day. From birth to about the time they begin to toddle around, children are considered infants. Merriam-Webster defines an infant as "a child in the first period of life" but doesn't give any age specifics. It describes a baby as "an extremely young child." In guiding new parents, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) refers to infancy as the stage between birth and 1 year old. Kids develop at an astounding rate between their delivery date and their first birthday. They're likely to hit many milestones, including: During this time, babies will learn to bond with their caregivers, and they understand more than they're able to communicate. Infants enjoy music, movement, and simple games like peek-a-boo. The toddler stage generally lasts from 1 to 3 years old. Children are considered preschoolers when they're 3 to 5 years old. How old is a toddler? The toddler stage is generally considered to begin when a child is between 1 and 2 years old. For many, an infant is promoted to a toddler just after their first birthday, whether or not they're officially walking (or toddling) yet. The CDC defines children ages 1 to 3 as toddlers, while 3- to 5-year-olds are characterized as preschoolers. The AAP follows the same definitions. Most people consider the end of the toddler age range to be around the time a child transitions into preschool. As kids move into their second year of life, they become more mobile and independent, exploring everything they can access. Here are some milestones you'll notice during the toddler years: Walking (usually by 18 months) Learning to talk (and eventually speaking in phrases and sentences) Identifying and imitating the people around them Following simple instructions Feeding themselves Engaging in play Expressing more emotions and awareness Imitating the behavior of others Running, kicking, and climbing as they near preschool age Developing other fine and gross motor skills Like little sponges, toddlers soak up everything, so memorization comes fairly easily. They still need lots of sleep and may take a nap or two during the day, contributing to a total of 11 to 14 hours of sleep daily. Toddlers enjoy simple games, songs, and rhymes, and they can start learning their colors, shapes, and alphabet. Children develop at different rates, and it's normal for one child to reach certain milestones at a different age than another. But if you are worried about your baby's development, don't hesitate to bring it up with a pediatric health care provider. Your baby's doctor can reassure you or refer you to a specialist if there's a need for further evaluation or support. Thanks for your feedback! Pre-pregnancy care is the care a woman gets before she becomes pregnant.Women can help to promote a healthy pregnancy and the birth of a healthy infant by taking the following steps before they become pregnant:1.Develop a plan for their reproductive life.Increase their daily intake of folic acid (one of the B vitamins) to at least 400 micrograms.Make sure their immunizations are up to date.Control their diabetes and other medical conditions.Avoid smoking, drinking, and drug use.Strive to get to a healthy weight.Learn about their family health history and that of their partner.Avoid stress by getting mentally healthy.It is also important that women contact their healthcare provider as soon as they think they might be pregnant. That way, they can confirm their pregnancy and schedule their first prenatal exam.What is prenatal care?Women can increase their chances for a healthy pregnancy by getting regular prenatal care starting early in their pregnancy, eating right, exercising, and not smoking.Prenatal care is the care a woman gets during pregnancy. Early and regular prenatal visits to a healthcare provider are important for the health of both the mother and her developing fetus. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, women who do not seek prenatal care are three times as likely to deliver a low-birth-weight infant as those who do. Lack of prenatal care can also increase the risk of infant death.2.Both the length of prenatal visits and what happens during these visits vary depending on the week of pregnancy. Generally, at each visit, women provide a urine sample, and a nurse checks their weight and blood pressure. They also meet with their healthcare provider to discuss how their pregnancy is progressing.Prenatal NutritionPregnant women need more folic acid (a B vitamin) and certain other nutrients in their diet to help ensure that their infant is born healthy. Research shows that taking supplements of folic acid during pregnancy can prevent a type of congenital anomaly called neural tube defects. Usually, a pregnant woman's healthcare provider will advise her to take a prenatal vitamin supplement. The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) recommends that pregnant women who were of normal weight before pregnancy increase their food intake by about 300 calories per day.3.The total amount of weight a woman should gain during pregnancy depends on her pre-pregnancy weight.Women whose weight was in the healthy range before becoming pregnant should gain between 25 and 35 pounds while pregnant. The advice is different for those who have overweight or underweight before becoming pregnant.4.The U.S. Department of Agriculture offers an online tool (that can help women who are pregnant or breastfeeding plan their meals to ensure that their nutrition is optimal as judged by intake of specific food groups and stage of pregnancy.More information about weight gain during pregnancy is available in the "How much weight should I gain during pregnancy?" section.Exercise During PregnancyFor most women, ACOG recommends exercising 30 minutes or more each day during pregnancy. Exercise can help improve many unpleasant symptoms experienced by some women such as bloating, swelling, and backaches). It may also improve women's ability to cope with labor.5.Exercise is an important way to prevent or treat gestational diabetes, a condition that poses risks to the developing fetus.6.Some forms of activity should be avoided during pregnancy because they pose a high risk that the woman will fall and injure herself, her fetus, or both. It's also important to avoid getting dehydrated or overheated. The ACOG offers some specific recommendations for activities that are safe during pregnancy.6.Preparing for Baby's ArrivalInfants depend on their caregivers to meet all their needs. Learning about your infant's care and health is an important first step in making sure that he or she has the best health outcomes. Because you and other members of the family are the main caregivers for your child, it is important for all of you to know about what's involved in caring for your infant and ensuring that the child receives regular healthcare.Infants need frequent checkups and vaccinations, and they sometimes get sick.Before the infant is born, it is a good idea to choose a healthcare provider—a pediatrician, family physician, or pediatric nurse practitioner—who specializes in the care of infants and children. A directory of pediatricians is available through the American Academy of Pediatrics. March of Dimes. (2011). Getting ready for pregnancy. Retrieved May 17, 2012, from Office on Women's Health. (2009). Publications: Prenatal care fact sheet. Retrieved April 12, 2012, from American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. (2021). Nutrition during pregnancy. Retrieved August 27, 2021, from U.S. Department of Agriculture. (n.d.). Health & nutrition information for pregnant & breastfeeding women. Retrieved August 1, 2012, from American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. (2019). Exercise during pregnancy. Retrieved August 27, 2021, from American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. (2020). Gestational diabetes. Retrieved August 27, 2021, from What happens during the newborn, infant and toddler stage? Does your baby enter toddlerhood even if they're not toddling? If you're getting confused with the myriad of references to your baby, you're not alone. These terms are often used interchangeably by professionals, so you may be wondering when your newborn became an infant and whether you missed a significant developmental stage in the process. In its simplest form, developmental refers to the way a child grows, changes and develops and encompasses everything from physical, social, emotional and cognitive development. Early development can be broken down into three main stages for young children: • Newborn (0-3 months)• Infant (3-12 months)• Toddler (1-3 years) It's important to understand exactly what happens during the newborn, infant and toddler stage of life and learn what milestones they should be hitting. Let's explore each of these stages in a bit more detail. Your newborn baby will get called a number of things in the first three months. Nurses may refer to them as newborns, social workers may call them infants, and you simply may call your new bundle of joy a baby. Most experts tend to use newborn for those under 3 months (12 weeks). Each child progresses at a different rate, but in the first three months of a baby's life, you'll get to see your little one hit some massive milestones. These will include their vision becoming more focused, they'll make sounds and follow objects and start to follow you walking in and out of the room. They'll react to your voice and even start melting your heart with their gummy smile. The term infant can also be used during the newborn stage and realistically up until they hit their first birthday. After they move past three months stage, they'll start moving their hands and feet more, waving, clapping, crawling and eventually, take their first steps. You'll notice they'll also start picking up small objects with their thumb and pointer finger (the pincer grip) which you'll notice more if you're trying baby-led weaning. Infants will start to coo and babble, dance to music, blow raspberries, find their voice and start saying their first words - usually 'da da' and 'ma ma' much to everyone's delight. While enjoying tummy time, they'll start pushing their head up and strengthening their muscles. This will be another developmental milestone for them and this may even lead to them rolling on to their back. It's such a wonderful time for infants as they learn to explore their environment, voice and their physical body. Once they hit their first birthday and start walking, infants become toddlers whether you're ready for it or not. Many experts agree that the ages of toddlerhood begins when your child is about one year old and start to take their first steps. Generally, the toddler age range runs until 3-4 years or, just before they hit pre-school. At toddler age, they're still reliant on their caregivers but are very curious and will be hitting other milestones including following simple instructions, colour and shape sorting, putting together basic words, getting better at feeding themselves, as well as playing, running and climbing (good luck trying to keep up with them!). How long is a newborn, a newborn? The term is typically defined as a baby up to 3 months old. However, there's no right or wrong definition. You'll hear the nurse or social worker refer to them as newborns, babies and infants. A toddler age is usually after their first birthday up until the age of 3, just before they hit the pre-school years. Keya Medessa, is our Senior Digital Writer and brings over a decade of experience from the digital world to Mother's Baby. As a mother of two, Keya understands the joys and challenges of modern parenthood and uses her own experience, to give practical advice. Keya has worked across national publications including glossy women's mags, Food and Travel, and more recently Muddy Stilletoes. Health & Medicine Anatomy & Physiology infant and toddler development, the physical, emotional, behavioral, and mental growth of children from birth to 36 months.Different milestones characterize each stage of infant (0 to 12 months) and toddler (12 to 36 months) development. Although most healthy infants and toddlers reach each milestone within a specific window of time, there is much variation as to how wide that window may be. For example, culture, environment, socioeconomic status, and genetic factors can influence when an infant or toddler will begin to crawl, walk, or talk. Children who suffer from undernutrition, who lack social stimuli, or who lack access to proper health care may develop more slowly than children in more enriched environments. Concerns about infant or toddler development arise when milestones are absent or significantly delayed, since such situations may signal an underlying physical or mental condition. Identifying problems early in development is vital to a child's health. Although parents are often the first to raise concerns, teachers and child care workers may spot problems that parents have not noticed or have been afraid to acknowledge. They may also be able to identify abused or neglected children who exhibit abnormal development.Early in the 20th century, child development scholars began to understand that children were not just "small adults" but individuals with unique personalities and distinct needs. In the 1920s and '30s Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget developed a theory that children's cognitive abilities progress through four stages. According to Piaget, a sensorimotor stage characterized the first two years of life, during which time a child also becomes aware of the permanence of existence of objects in his or her environment. The work of Russian psychologist Lev S. Vygotsky, which reached English-speaking audiences around the same time as Piaget's, provided insight into how children think and develop language.In 1933 the Society for Research in Child Development (SRCD) was established in the United States to apply new concepts in child development to improving the lives of the country's children. The society initially focused on understanding how poverty and social deprivation affected development, with the aim of using that knowledge to design policies and programs to alleviate the negative effects of poverty. In 1964 U.S. Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson launched his War on Poverty, and in 1965 the U.S. Congress established the Head Start Program, which promotes "school readiness" for children from birth to five years. The program focuses its efforts on children from low-income families and offers health, nutritional, and social support to enrolled children and families. Within hours of a normal birth, most infants are alert and beginning to react to their surroundings. Although immature, all body systems are operating. Infants have the ability to swallow, suck, gag, cough, yawn, blink, and eliminate waste. Hearing is well developed, but it takes several years for vision to reach adult levels. Studies conducted on newborns demonstrate that newborns can already discriminate facelike shapes from straight lines. The startle reflex is also apparent, and newborns react to sudden unexpected movements and loud noises. The grasping reflex allows even the tiniest infants to hold onto someone's finger. The sense of smell and taste are also evident, and infants will turn away from unpleasant smells and express preferences for sweet tastes over bitter. Characteristics of the Human Body Physically, heads are large in proportion to the rest of the body. Average birth weight varies from about 2.5 to 4.5 kg (5.5 to 10 pounds), and length varies from 45.7 to 53.3 cm (18 to 21 inches). After losing 5 to 7 percent of birth weight, infants begin to gain an average of 142 to 170 grams (5 to 6 ounces) a week. Over the next few days, infants develop their own patterns, alternating from sleep to crying to alertness and returning to sleep. Young infants sleep in the fetal position; when placed on their backs, the chance of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is reduced. Many infants sleep from three to four hours between feedings, initially requiring from 6 to 10 feedings per day. Crying and fussing are the major forms of communication for infants. Research reveals that babies respond well to "baby talk," which is considered essential to language development. Infants react to touch and approval and will join in clapping. Sometimes infants also express their displeasure by resisting, kicking, or screaming. In some cultures, this independence is strictly discouraged, whereas others see it as a sign of confidence. As a parent you care your children a good deal in life—you nurture, protect, and guide them. Learn about developmental milestones and how to help your baby reach them. Newborn reflexes begin to disappear. If this does not occur, it may be an indication of neurological problems. 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Children learn by imitation, and how well infants and toddlers learn to mimic others is a vital key in tracking healthy development. One of the first signs of infant imitation is responding to a smile with a smile. Later, infants learn to mimic other facial expressions and sounds. As normal infants grow, the head and chest circumference become relatively equal. Infants learn to flip from one side to the other in a prone position. They progress to sitting alone and to crawling. Pulling up on someone's hands or furniture is followed by standing alone. By the end of the first year, many babies have taken their first steps. Following the cooing of early infancy, older infants vocalize simple sounds and begin to say words such as dada, mama, and bye-bye. The infant can now pick up small pieces of food and manipulate a spoon and baby cup. Infants try to brush their own hair and turn the pages of books. They enjoy songs and rhymes and may try to dance and sing. 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