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Shape Shifter

Can you get your pre-baby body back?



Q ▶ I was in good shape before I got pregnant. How will I ever get my “old” body back after my baby is born?

A ▶ Understandably, you may worry you’ll never have time to exercise again, but you will. All new mothers struggle with taking time for themselves. The trick is to make it a conscious decision—a priority—that you commit to do every day.

The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists suggests that if you were active before pregnancy and had a normal vaginal birth, you might be able to start walking and doing basic strengthening for the stomach, back, and pelvis as soon as you feel able. If you had a C-section, you may need to wait several weeks to start any activity.

You won’t be able to run five miles or bike 20 miles at first, of course. But start by walking (with your baby in a stroller, front carrier, or sling) within a few days of giving birth. Once you’re a little stronger and your doctor or midwife says it’s OK, look for a postnatal exercise class that welcomes babies. You might also invest in equipment or DVDs to use at home, so you can work out while your baby is sleeping.

True or False?

My baby had to be whisked away when she was born. Did I lose the best chance for bonding?

The time after birth is important for creating a secure infant-mother attachment, but the idea that you forever lost a chance to bond is **FALSE**. Don’t feel guilty and anxious about what you couldn’t control. You have a whole lifetime to establish that bond.

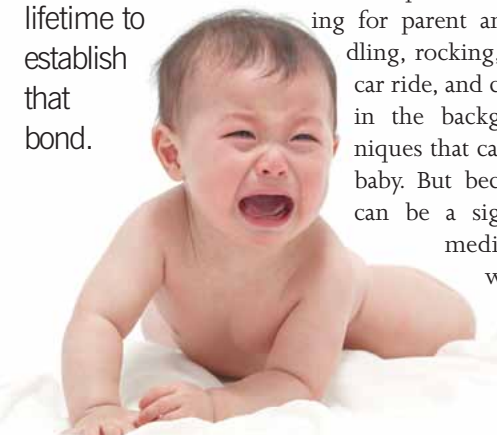
Q ▶ My 2-month-old baby cries a lot. Could he have colic?

A ▶ Babies cry and they often cry a lot. It’s the only way they can communicate their hunger, fatigue, pain, fear, or sense of being overwhelmed. So crying itself is very normal.

Colic, on the other hand, is unexplained, excessive crying in a healthy baby. For most babies with colic, the crying starts around 3 weeks of age and goes on for several hours a day, usually at the same time (often the late afternoon or early evening), at least several times a week. The crying seems to have no cause. The babies are fed, rested, and have a clean diaper, although they sometimes draw their legs up, which can make it look like they’re in pain.

Researchers aren’t sure exactly how many babies get colic (conventional wisdom says 20%, but the diagnostic method isn’t exact) or why babies get colic in the first place. But colic doesn’t last forever, and the crying intensity for most babies peaks at around 4 to 6 weeks, then subsides to normal levels (remember, they all cry) by about 3 months.

Without question, colic can be exhausting for parent and baby alike. Swaddling, rocking, singing, going for a car ride, and creating “white noise” in the background are all techniques that can help calm a colicky baby. But because constant crying can be a sign of an underlying medical problem, check with your doctor to rule out reflux, a hernia, or some other problem.



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Becoming a mom inspires the singer-songwriter to stay off the road, make an album for kids, and nurture her youngest fan, Kase

Jewel's new tune

By Stephanie Watson, WebMD Contributing Writer

Jewel is used to performing to big crowds. Her sweet, soulful voice soars across packed concert halls around the world. But these days, the singer-songwriter plays to an audience of one—son Kase Townes Murray, born in mid-July.

Fortunately, Jewel has plenty of material to sing him to sleep after late-night feedings. Her 2009 album, *Lullaby*, is filled with enough angels, dreamers, and gentle melodies to soothe even the fussiest baby into slumber.

"I sing a lot of the songs off that album to him," Jewel, 37, says. "Each one really represented something special for me that I wanted my child to know."

Most of the lullabies on the album are originals, penned while she was trying to get pregnant. "I wrote and recorded *Lullaby* thinking hopefully about a future child," she recalls.

Years before she became a mom, Jewel already had a strong sense of the emotions having a child would stir up. In the song "Sweet Dreams for You," she prophetically wrote, "...there once was a day it was gray in a world without you. To this heart, like a doll from above, a miracle of your love found me."

"I tried to say it as clearly as I thought I'd feel and it definitely came true," she says of the lyrics. "It is an amazing love and it really is a gift."

Jewel's own gift lies in her storytelling. Maybe it just comes naturally to someone whose personal history reads like a novel—or a verse lifted straight from a classic folk song. Raised by homesteaders in the Alaska wilderness, Jewel Kilcher spent her early years living in a barn with no heat or indoor plumbing. The musically gifted teen had no money to finance her journey to stardom, so she hopped trains cross-country. Her guitar was her meal ticket. She sang for food and busked for spare change.

Those rough-hewn early years helped Jewel stay levelheaded through her meteoric rise to fame. "I really feel like the chores and the hard work that I was raised with kept me grounded. I think it's why I've never let fame or success go to my head, because I always returned to the land," she says.

She came back to her roots with her husband, professional bull rider Ty Murray, who also knows a thing or two about working the land. He too is ranch-raised—a fifth-generation cowboy.

They plan to bring Kase up with the same kind of frontier work ethic. When he's old enough, Kase will have to do his share of the chores on their 2,500-acre Texas ranch. "It was important to us to try to provide a lifestyle that helps him learn what work is and what being grounded is," she says.

While Jewel is taking a break from her own chores on the ranch to care for Kase, she hasn't stopped writing and recording

songs. While she was pregnant, she wrote and produced a children's CD, *The Merry Goes 'Round*.



JEWELS OF ADVICE

The singer-songwriter and first-time mom shares a few tips for other new mothers.

Cut yourself some slack.

"I think moms feel a lot of pressure to be perfect, or to lose the baby weight instantly, or to act like they have everything together and put on a brave face. You don't." Give yourself time to recover from your delivery and get to know your baby. "Try to be kind to yourself," she suggests.

Live for today. Focus on the present with your baby—not the future. "Don't have any expectations of how you think it's supposed to go, so you can take each day as it comes."

The album, which Jewel describes as a mix of Dixieland, blues, folk, and grassroots country, are songs Kase can grow up with. "I didn't talk down to children," she says. "I tried to write well-crafted, well-written pop songs... they just happen to be whimsical and funny and entertaining, but not stupid."

Unlike with previous releases, the singer-songwriter won't be promoting her new album on a cross-country tour. Aside from a few scattered concert dates in the fall, she's sticking close to home. For the next few months, her "work" will revolve around changing diapers and feeding her son, she says.

"I look at this as the most important role of my life," she says. "I think Ty and I both waited until the right time in our lives when we could afford to make this our priority. This is what I want to be great at, and this is what I want to put my focus on." ■

WEST KENNEDY/GETTY IMAGES (2)

Trade tips with other new moms in the [parenting communities](#). [WebMD.com](#)



Food chain

What to serve the first year

By Heather Hatfield, WebMD Contributing Writer

It's OK to admit it, new parents: You're feeling a bit frantic about feeding your baby. You'll be relieved to know it doesn't require a degree in nutrition science. From liquids—via breast or bottle—all the way up to starting solids, Jennifer Shu, MD, pediatrician and co-author of *Food Fights: Winning the Nutritional Challenges of Parenthood Armed With Insight, Humor, and a Bottle of Ketchup*, offers this basic guide to what your baby should eat and drink during the first year of life.

Birth to 4 Months

Whether you decide to formula-feed, breast-feed, or use a mix of both, a liquid diet is all your baby needs for the first few months.

- For breastfeeding, let baby be the boss. Watch your baby's cues to know how much and how often to feed her. If she starts turning her head or pushing away, she's probably done. If she wakes up from a nap and starts sucking on her fingers, it's time to feed again.
- For formula-feeders, always be sure to mix the formula according to the instructions on the label. And don't forget to wash your hands before you handle the formula or bottle.
- Try to get your baby comfortable drinking liquids at room temperature or straight from the fridge so you can skip the step of heating them.
- Offer only the amount of formula you think your baby will finish at one sitting. Once the bottle has touched her mouth, it's good for only about an hour, at which point bacteria starts to multiply in the bottle.

4 Months to 1 Year

Typically in months 4 through 6, it's time to start solids. Think safety first—offer food that's small, soft, and smooth to avoid choking as your baby learns the mechanics of chewing and eating.

- While rice cereal has long been the recommended first food, it's time for mush to move over. The latest thinking is that any single-ingredient food—meat, fruit, vegetables, or cereal—is a good starting point as long as it covers the bases of small, soft, and smooth. While meat might be a surprise to some parents, it's a good choice because it's high in iron that's better absorbed by babies than that in infant cereal.
- Be on allergy alert. Wait at least three days before working a new food into the rotation so you can watch for allergies that can develop immediately, like swelling or breathing problems, or more slowly, like hives or eczema.

- Be sure to keep old foods in the rotation to build up a well-rounded menu of flavors and textures.



- Hold off on giving your baby whole milk until 1 year. When it comes to introducing yogurt though, most pediatricians recommend waiting until your baby is 9 months or older. It's processed, so the milk protein is more tolerable. Before this age, babies have a limited amount of lactase enzyme (which helps digest lactose).
- Routine, routine, routine. Feed your baby in the same place every meal, every day, while she is seated in a secured seat. Don't let your baby eat on the run—it not only poses a choking hazard, but it also sets the stage for eating battles when she grows into toddlerhood. ■

TOP LEFT: ANDERSEN ROSS/GETTY IMAGES; BRIAN HAGIWARA/GETTY IMAGES

Hungry for more feeding advice?  WebMD.com



Going mobile

Our 6- to 9-month milestones guide

By Gina Shaw
WebMD Contributing Writer

The second part of your child's first year is filled with so many developmental changes that you may feel you need a constantly running video camera to record them all.

So what should your baby be doing, and when? Katherine Connor, MD, a pediatrician at the Harriet Lane Clinic of Johns Hopkins Children's Center, says babies tend to develop "from the top down and from the middle out." So while your baby spent his first six months getting control of his big, floppy head and his midsection—learning to roll over—he'll spend the next six perfecting the use of his increasingly dexterous fingers and learning to get mobile.

Connor urges parents to remember that all babies develop skills at their own pace. "There is a wide range of normal," she says. "Many parents worry, for example, if their baby isn't walking by a year, but in fact many babies don't walk until well past their first birthday. What you want to see is continuous progression forward." Here are some of the changes you can anticipate:

6 MONTHS

- Gross motor skills:** Sits up on his own—without being propped—if you get him into a sitting position
- Fine motor skills:** Transfers objects from one hand to the other

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Language skills: Babbles in a way that can sound tantalizingly like real words—"mama," "dada," "baba"

Social skills: Responds to you by looking toward you or smiling at you when you say his name

7 MONTHS

Gross motor: Tries hard to move forward by scooting or "army crawling," or rocking back and forth on all fours

Fine motor: Begins to scoop up small objects using a "rake grasp," sweeping with all the fingers

Language: Imitates sounds you make to him, like raspberries, babble talk, and laughter

Social: Starts to enjoy eye contact and games like peek-a-boo

8 MONTHS

Gross motor: Gets into a sitting position on his own. Babies who do crawl usually start about now. (Not all babies crawl—don't worry if yours doesn't.)

Fine motor: Plays at picking up and dropping objects

Language: Some babies start using babble words like "mama" and "dada" to refer to people. Don't be surprised if he calls both parents "dada" for awhile.

Social: Learns to understand object permanence—that things still exist when he can't see them. That may mean the start of separation anxiety, but don't be concerned. Babies grow out of this phase.

9 MONTHS

Gross motor: Tries to pull himself up to a standing position using furniture and other objects

Fine motor: Has mastered the rake grasp—picks up objects with all four fingers engaged

Language: Uses a lot of gestures like pointing, shaking his head, and nodding to communicate

Social: Stranger anxiety has kicked in. Babies who were happy going to a trusted sitter may suddenly melt down. This too shall pass. ■

What development can you expect in the next few months?  WebMD.com

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