



NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.

Helping Hand™

Health Education for Patients and Families

Infant Vision: Birth 1 to Year

What does my baby see? This is a very common question. This handout describes what your baby sees from birth to 1 year of age, and how you can stimulate your baby's vision.

Birth to 1 Month of Age

At birth, your baby:

- Sees in black and white and in shades of gray.
- Is not very light-sensitive.
- Has eyes that are about 65% of their adult size.
- Has trouble focusing their eyes.
- Has eyes that are large compared to their body.

One week after birth, your baby starts to slowly develop color vision. They can also see about 8 to 10 inches away. At 6 weeks of age, a baby can see about 12 inches away.

2 to 3 Months

Your baby should:

- Follow objects with their eyes. This is called tracking.
- Recognize your face.
- Start reaching for things.
- Remember what they see.

For the first 2 months of life, an infant's eyes do not work well together and may cross or wander. This usually goes away. If it continues, or if an eye is always turned in or out, talk to your baby's doctor or health care provider.

4 Months

Your baby's vision is clear, and now they can see farther away. They still prefer looking at you up closely. At this age, an infant uses both eyes (binocular vision) and is working on their depth perception. Encourage play time by reaching for bright objects and toys.

6 Months

Your baby's eyes should be working together all the time. They can see colors like adults do. Play peek-a-boo and use mirrors to help develop vision.

- The color of your baby's eyes may change during the first 6 months. Many babies are born with blue eyes. Over time, dark pigment is made, which makes their eyes darker. Usually the color does not change much after 6 months of age.

7 to 12 Months

Your baby is now moving around more. They are better at judging distances and grabbing objects. Babies are learning how their vision works when their body moves.

When to Call the Doctor

All infants should have regular checkups with their doctor or health care provider so they can screen for problems.

Babies that are born early (premature) are at high risk for vision problems. All premature infants should be seen by a pediatric eye doctor (ophthalmologist) by 1 to 2 years of age.

Call your baby's doctor or health care provider if:

- Their eyes do not work together and/or are not properly aligned in all directions.
- Their pupils are different sizes.
- They are not tracking items with their eyes.
- They are staring at lights.
- Their eyes have a lot of tearing or crusting.
- They turn or tilt their head to one side to view objects.
- They close one eye most of the time.
- They are very sensitive to light.
- You are concerned about your baby's eyes or vision.

If your baby's regular doctor or health care provider is concerned about their eye health or visual development, they can recommend a pediatric ophthalmologist.

If there are any problems with your baby's vision, it's better to find them early. The earlier problems are found, the sooner they can be taken care of.