

Information and advice you need from the delivery room to  
baby's first birthday and everything in between

# Your Baby's First Year

FOR  
**DUMMIES**<sup>®</sup>

**James Gaylord, MD**

*Former assistant professor,  
Albany Medical School*

**Michelle Hagen**

*Author, professional writer*

**A Reference for the Rest of Us!**



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# About the Authors

Dr. James Gaylord has a dual Board Certification in Pediatrics and Internal Medicine and has been in private practice in Burnt Hills, N.Y. since 1997. He is a 1988 graduate of Albany Medical College, where he also served as an assistant professor from 1993 to 1997. His training includes a residency in Pediatrics and Internal Medicine; he also spent a year (1992-93) as chief resident in Pediatrics. He continues to train medical students in his private practice.

Dr. Gaylord and his wife Diane live on a horse farm in Greenfield, N.Y. with their three children: Abigail, 11; Brendan, 10; and Margaret, 7.

Michelle Hagen is a freelance writer and editor and the author of 8 books. She has a degree in literature from Empire State College and lives in Wilton, NY with her husband and three sons.

## Dedication

Dr. James Gaylord: To my children: Abby, Brendan, and Maggie, who taught me so much about parenting in the first year of life.

Michelle Hagen: This book is for my babies: Sam, Hal, and Nolan (who truly aren't babies at all anymore). I'm constantly amazed by the fact that I'm raising three

incredibly amusing, interesting, and good-hearted young men. I love you, I love you, I love you.

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# Introduction

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When you're pregnant and preparing for the future with Baby, it's so easy to nail down a "schedule" for feedings, for naps, for your own return to work. And then your dream child becomes a reality and you find that — well, she has her own ideas that don't quite coincide with your best-laid plans.

For some people, bringing a baby into the home is no big deal — their child is quiet and mellow, and just a joy to behold throughout the first year and beyond. For the parents of a fussy, sleepless infant, however, the experience is completely different. And because you'll be talking to other new parents at the doctor's office or at a playgroup, the parents of the restless baby assume that the parents of the quiet infant have a line on some secret method of raising a laid-back kid. Enter parental guilt and feelings of inadequacy.

There are bound to be times during Baby's first year when you feel as though you've got the world by the tail: Baby's sleeping and eating well, she's hitting those milestones right on time, and you're balancing childcare with work or with housekeeping. Then again, for every action, there's an equal and opposite reaction; it only makes sense that there will also be times when you feel like you don't know what the heck is going on, and wonder why you ever thought you could handle this huge responsibility in the first place.

Give yourself a break during those moments. The first year is one big learning experience — for you and your child. Baby will be conquering new territory every month (detailed in the pages of this book), and you'll be right there, cheering her on and adjusting your own life to meet her latest wants and needs. There will be days of triumph (as when Baby smiles, coos, and laughs for the first time) and days that you'd rather just forget (teething — 'nough said). *All* of the days go by so quickly, though, and before you know it, Baby will be 3 months, 6 months, 9 months, and then 1 year old. It all happens without your realizing it — Baby's a toddler and you're a confident, veteran parent.

This book was written with the intention of giving new parents a realistic look at what Baby's first year may be like. Think of this as a time to become acquainted with your child as she grows into her personality and you grow into parenthood.

## **About This Book**

This book was written by a pediatrician with a booming practice and two great kids of his own, and a writer/mom who's raising three boys — and all of these kids were completely different during their first years. We've left out a lot of scientific research on why babies behave the way they do and have mostly focused on the practical and emotional aspects of seeing your child through the first year.

For example, you won't find statistics in this book, because, quite frankly, it isn't all that helpful to know that a certain percentage of infants sleep through the night at 3 months if *your* 3-month-old is still waking up three times between midnight and daybreak. Knowing how to encourage her to catch forty winks is far more helpful than comparing your experience to phantom families around the country, so in this book, you find no-nonsense advice given in the simplest terms and presented in an easy-to-find format.

We know that parenting is hard work — we've been there personally, and Dr. Gaylord has listened to many, many, many parents' concerns about the first year. We've laid out information in plain language and with a twist — we took off our rose-colored glasses while writing in an effort to let new parents know that the first year, while magical and wonderful and glorious (and far too fleeting), inevitably has its moments of confusion and frustration. We want new parents to know that they're not alone, and that feeling this way is normal — it doesn't make you a bad mom or dad. It makes you human.

## **Conventions Used in This Book**

To help you navigate through this book, we've established the following conventions:

- ✓ *Italic* is used for emphasis and to highlight new words or terms that are defined.
- ✓ Monofont is used for Web addresses.
- ✓ Sidebars, which are shaded gray boxes full of text, consist of information that's interesting but not necessarily critical to your understanding of the topic.

Baby math can spin a parent's head around at times. We tried to keep the months and the chapter titles in sync in order to eliminate confusion. Please bear in mind that when we refer to, for example, a "1-month-old" or an "almost-1-month-old," we're talking about a child in the first month of life and approaching the 4-week mark.

## What You're Not to Read

Sidebars included in this book are "extra" information — a more in-depth look at areas of concern during the first year. Some focus on development, others focus on recent studies — none of them are crucial to your understanding the rest of this book. Read them if you want, and skip them if you aren't into that kind of thing. No big whoop.

## Foolish Assumptions

We assume that you've picked up this book for one of several reasons:

- ✔ You're pregnant and wondering what Baby's first year will be like.
- ✔ You've given birth and are reading everything you can get your hands on regarding the months ahead.
- ✔ You've given birth and you wanted a book that doesn't talk down to you or make you feel as though there's something wrong with you if you're having a hard time making the adjustment to parenthood.

We go on to assume that you're looking for advice on making it through the first year, that you know it's not always going to be easy, that you want to be the best parent you're capable of becoming, and that you're willing to give up preconceived notions (read: fantasies) of how these first 12 months with a child *should* be. That's all.

In a nutshell: If you have a baby in the house, we want to talk to you.

Other titles in the *For Dummies* series that you may want to check out include *Breastfeeding For Dummies* by Sharon Perkins and Carol Vannais, *Choosing Childcare For Dummies* by Ann Douglas, and *Parenting For Dummies* by Sandra Hardin Gookin and Dan Gookin — all published by Wiley. These books will give you a great overview of various aspects of child-rearing.

# How This Book Is Organized

We've broken this book into 24 chapters. Each of Baby's first 12 months is addressed in its own chapter, including a list of milestones for each specific time period, a discussion of what happens during each well-baby visit, and tips for ensuring Baby's safety and well-being at every stage of development. The chapters are grouped into sections.

# **Part I: Giving Baby a Healthy, Happy Start**

These debut chapters focus on preparing your house for Baby, what happens in the maternity ward, deciding on a method of feeding your child, and actually transporting Baby home. We also discuss the production of traveling with an infant in this section, along with information to guide you in making the decision to return to work — or to stay home. Diverse topics, yes, but issues you want to know about and consider so that you're not forced to make decisions on-the-spot.

## **Part II: Introducing: Baby!**

These chapters focus on Baby's infancy, including an honest discussion of a new mom's recovery from childbirth and how Baby may or may not be settling into her new home. Look for the milestone markers at the beginning of each chapter to know what Baby may be up to during this time.