

Emerging from the Cocoon

Protect your baby Protect your family Protect your community

You have carefully protected your baby in the womb and in the first precious weeks of their life through cocooning. Cocooning is the process of making sure that the important people in the baby's life have been vaccinated against Whooping Cough (pertussis) and other illnesses. Soon enough you and your baby will be out in the world resuming your everyday activities. It is important to keep increasing the layers of protection that surround your baby.

There are many types of bacteria that babies encounter every day, some are helpful bacteria that protect your baby and some are harmful bacteria that make your baby sick. Harmful bacteria can come from brothers and sisters, family and friends, toys at day care, and dirt on the playground. Helpful bacteria develop over time in the mouth, gut and on the skin.

Breastfeeding supports the helpful bacteria in the baby's gut, as well as continuing to provide the baby with the mother's antibodies. The skin and gut create their own protective bacteria. These protective bacteria act as a barrier against invading harmful bacteria.

In the first weeks of your baby's life, you gradually expose them to bacteria and viruses in the environment as their immune system changes from a baby system to an adult system. By two months of age, your baby's immune system is ready to develop its own defenses against the hundreds of germs they encounter every day!

The baby's immune system is ready and able to develop many antibodies at one time. Because the baby's immune system is so active, we have learned that we can put several immunizations into one shot. Each immunization contains only a small number of bacteria or virus, but just enough to stimulate antibodies. The baby's immune system is ready and able to process all these immunizations at once!

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