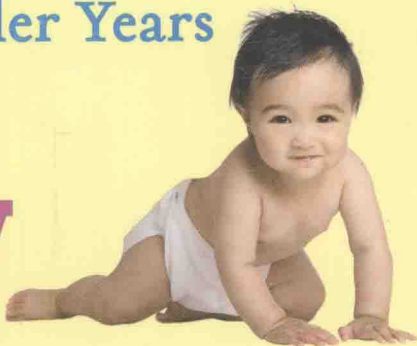




The Head-to-Toe Guide  
to Your Child's Health,  
from Birth Through the  
Toddler Years

# baby body signs



Joan Liebmann-Smith, Ph.D.,

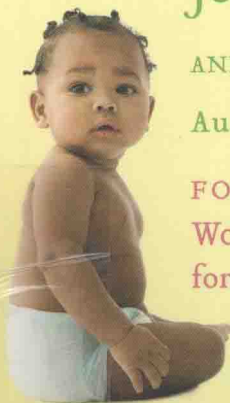
AND Jacqueline Nardi Egan

Authors of *Body Signs*

FOREWORD BY

Woodie Kessel, M.D., M.P.H.,

former Assistant U.S. Surgeon General



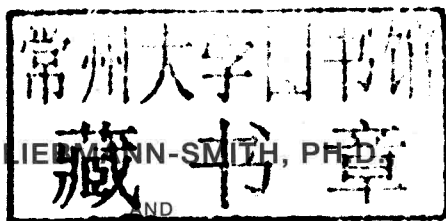
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# BABY BODY SIGNS

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FROM BIRTH THROUGH THE TODDLER YEARS

JOAN LIEB MANN-SMITH, PH.D.



JACQUELINE NARDI EGAN

*Foreword by Woodie Kessel, M.D., M.P.H.,  
former Assistant U.S. Surgeon General*



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*Praise for*

## **BABY BODY SIGNS**

"*Baby Body Signs* is the antidote for the anxiety parents suffer when they notice something unusual about their baby and then worry until their next doctor visit. It is well written and contains a wealth of information not found in other parenting books. It will be an excellent addition to any parent's library."

—JEFFREY L. BROWN, M.D., F.A.A.P., clinical  
professor of pediatrics, New York Medical  
College; author of *The Complete Parents'  
Guide to Telephone Medicine*

"This is one of the most useful baby books my wife and I have come across, and it often cuts right to the chase of what's serious and what's not. As new parents, we find ourselves asking exactly the kinds of questions this book answers. In many situations, unnecessary long hours in doctor's office waiting rooms, long holds to speak to nurse advice call-in lines, misinformation gathered from Internet searches, and serious conditions going undiagnosed could be avoided if all parents had a copy of this book on their shelf."

—NEIL SHULMAN, M.D., associate professor,  
Emory University School of Medicine; co-author  
of *Your Body's Red Light Warning Signals*

ALSO BY JOAN LIEBMANN-SMITH, PH.D.,  
AND  
JACQUELINE NARDI EGAN

*Body Signs: From Warning Signs to False Alarms . . .  
How to Be Your Own Diagnostic Detective*

*The Unofficial Guide to Getting Pregnant*

*The Unofficial Guide to Overcoming Infertility*

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# BABY BODY SIGNS

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To my daughter, Rebecca, who delighted me as a baby and has continued to do so for more than two decades; and to my late mother, Dorothy, who used to say to me, "Just wait till you're a mother!" I'm so glad I took her advice.

*Joan Liebmann-Smith*

To my daughter, Elizabeth, whose birth made me believe in "love at first sight"; and in memory of my mother, Antoinette Nardi, who taught me that being a mother is the greatest joy.

*Jacqueline Nardi Egan*

This book is designed to provide helpful and informative material on the subjects addressed. It is not meant to replace consultation with a physician or other licensed healthcare provider, particularly regarding any signs or symptoms that may require diagnosis or treatment. The authors, the publisher, and the *Baby Body Signs* Panel of Medical Experts expressly disclaim responsibility for any adverse effects that may result from the use or application of the information contained in this book.



## FOREWORD

*One of the mysteries is that as unlike as we are, one human being from another, we also share much in common. Our lives begin the same way, by birth. The love and interdependence of parents and children is universal, and so are the many difficulties parents and children have. . . . Who you are inside is what helps you make and do everything in life.*

—Fred Rogers, *The World According to Mister Rogers:  
Important Things to Remember*

THESE INSIGHTFUL WORDS of wisdom are dedicated by my good friend Mister Rogers to “anyone who has loved you into being.” Fred understood well the significance that parents, families, and neighbors have in nurturing healthy growth and development during a child’s formative years. Although primarily focused on emotional health, Fred genuinely appreciated the importance of both psychosocial well-being and good physical health. Loving a child into being takes caring, compassion, and comprehension of how to protect a child from harm, prevent disease and disability, and promote his or her emotional, social, mental, and physical health and well-being.

Caring for and nurturing your baby is a wondrous time. Each day brings something new to enjoy. As a parent, you want nothing but

the best for your baby. With an understanding and appreciation of certain signs and symptoms your baby might exhibit, you will be better able to ensure good health and a bright future for your child. Most of what you notice is likely to be normal but may seem curious, especially if you are a first-time parent. Some observations, however, may require further investigation and correct interpretation by your pediatrician. By knowing what to look for and working together with your pediatrician, you can make certain that your baby is as healthy as possible and stays that way.

*Baby Body Signs* by Joan Liebmman-Smith, Ph.D., and Jacqueline Nardi Egan, a wide-ranging compendium of information about your baby—literally from top to bottom—will help you gain valuable knowledge and help sharpen your observation skills. It is presented in an easily understandable manner replete with science-based information and drawings, all focused on providing accurate descriptions of common as well as uncommon signs or symptoms that a baby might exhibit. The authors also present detailed explanations of what these “baby body signs” might signify, all the while encouraging you to see your pediatrician if you are at all concerned.

*Baby Body Signs* is a wonderful and informative addition to the new family's library. It employs a thoughtful question-and-answer format designed to help you understand which signs are important and what those signs may mean. The book includes clearly labeled warning signs and an important “Signing Off” section that advises you on which signs warrant the immediate professional help of a pediatrician, as *Baby Body Signs* is *not* a self-diagnostic or treatment guide. Remember, when in doubt always check it out with your pediatrician!

Just as traffic signs provide drivers with important information about the road ahead, *Baby Body Signs* helps steer parents toward better understanding of what may be happening inside based on the body signs they see on the outside. With the knowledge gained from *Baby Body Signs*, parents—guided and supported by their

pediatrician—will be better able to love their baby into being healthy.

Wishing you and your baby a healthy, happy, and bright future,

*Woodie Kessel, M.D., M.P.H.*

*Dr. Woodie Kessel has been a pediatrician for more than thirty years. He served as an Assistant U.S. Surgeon General and is currently Professor of the Practice of Public Health at the University of Maryland.*

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# BABY BODY SIGNS

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## INTRODUCTION

MOST NEW PARENTS—WHETHER FIRST-TIME moms and dads or not—are understandably a bit paranoid about the health of their babies. Babies are tiny, fragile, and helpless beings. If they're not feeling well or are in pain, they can't tell anyone what's bothering them or where it hurts. They are totally dependent on doctors, parents, grandparents, nannies, babysitters, and other caregivers for their well-being.

We all know the classic signs of a sick baby: fever, diarrhea, vomiting, difficulty breathing, and listlessness, among others. But not all babies who have medical problems display such obvious signs. Rather, a baby who doesn't feel well or is in pain may cry, grimace, fuss, act irritable, or refuse to eat. Of course, these behaviors may simply indicate that the baby is overtired, wet, or cold. To complicate matters further, there are myriad medical problems ranging from mild to serious that cause neither pain nor discomfort. A baby may smile, laugh, coo, babble, play, and appear the picture of health, all while there is something medically amiss.

Many medical conditions may, in fact, manifest themselves with subtle signs that a caregiver can easily overlook or deem too insignificant for a doctor's attention. And some of these signs may portend something serious. For example, dark lip freckles can be a totally normal occurrence, or they can be one of the first warning signs of *Peutz-Jeghers syndrome*, a rare, potentially serious genetic condition (see Chapter 8). And while a white forelock may merely mean a baby's