Talk to Your Baby – Before Birth

Did you know that babies can hear your voice, feel your touch, and even catch your moods – before they are born?

By the sixth month of pregnancy, a baby can see, hear, smell, feel, remember, learn, and maybe even dream. “Whatever the mother feels—love, happiness, worry, anger—the baby feels, too.” (Thomas Verny, M.D., The Secret Life of the Unborn Child)

Following are some ideas on how to communicate with your baby before birth. In fact, you can begin right now by looking right at your abdomen and saying “Hi, baby!”

Early communication means a lot
Start early talking with your baby, touching and soothing him or her before birth. It’s fun for both of you, it shows how much you love your baby, and it strengthens the special lifetime bond between you.
• Talk to your baby often. Use short simple words, such as a nursery rhyme, so she gets to know them. Speak softly and gently; the words will be comforting.
• When she hears your voice, that makes her happy. Say “I love you,” the most important message of all. Your voice is music to the baby’s ears. Babies move in time to the patterns of their mother’s speech.
• Encourage the rest of your family to talk to your baby, too. They’ll start to think of him as a family member sooner. And he’ll start to recognize them as his family.

The magic of music
Babies love and move to the sound of real music. Give your baby a musical treat to show her you love her. Sing to her whenever you like, or play music for her.
The right music will calm and relax your baby. Babies love classical music, such as Vivaldi’s Four Seasons, and dislike hard-driving rock. Some mothers say the music that calmed their babies in the womb also makes them stop crying after they are born.

The importance of touch
Another way to communicate with your baby is touch. When you touch your abdomen the baby gets this message: “She knows I’m here! I’m important to her.” The baby will feel safe and wanted, and may calm down from being upset or very active. Think of how relaxing a backrub is.

Try combining touch with talk. If you can feel your baby’s foot, touch it and say something like, “Foot. Here’s baby’s foot.” His brain is getting ready for language, and you’re helping him get ready to put words and things together.

Your baby will communicate with you, too. It’s important to listen to her. A kick may mean she misses your voice or movement, or just wants to remind you she’s there.

These suggestions are only a start in getting in tune with your baby. Use your imagination. Treat your baby as a person with feelings like your own, before he or she is born. Get in touch with your baby before birth – and stay in touch after birth.