Crochet V-Stitch Baby Dress: Free Sleeveless Pattern, 3 to 12 Months

Crochet a plain double crochet yoke from the neck down in rows, lap the two back edges and join, leave two cut-in armholes, then gather a full V-stitch skirt under the yoke and finish with a plain edge. There are no seams, no sleeves and no buttons. In DK yarn on a 4 mm hook the 6 month dress is about 46.5 cm round the chest and 33 cm long.

This is our own design. A script re-works every row and round against the one before it, and checks the chest against published baby measurements, the neck opening against the size of a baby's head, the armholes against the upper arm, and the skirt against its flare rule. The sizes are worked out from a planning gauge, so they are estimates: measure Row 1 before you go on.

Pick your size

Size	Baby's chest	Dress chest	Neck edge, opens to	Armhole	Length	Hem	Yarn, about
3 months	16 in (40.5 cm)	about 43.5 cm	26.5 cm, opens to 46.5 cm	19.5 cm	about 31 cm	about 80 cm	325 m
6 months	17 in (43 cm)	about 46.5 cm	30 cm, opens to 50 cm	20.5 cm	about 33 cm	about 84.5 cm	370 m
12 months	18 in (45.5 cm)	about 50 cm	33.5 cm, opens to 53.5 cm	21.5 cm	about 34 cm	about 89 cm	405 m

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The baby's chest is the body measurement from our baby clothing measurements (https://crochetbabygifts.com/baby-clothing-measurements/) page, which adds 1 to 2 inches of ease for a top, so the dress is 2.5 to 4.5 cm bigger round the chest than the baby, measured just under the arms. The length runs from the back of the neck to the hem. It reaches the Craft Yarn Council's tunic length for a child, the back waist length plus 15 cm. The skirt is gathered to about 1.3 times the chest under the yoke and flares to about 1.8 times the chest at the hem.

The neck has to go over the baby's head, and a crochet neck edge hardly stretches. So the yoke is worked flat and the back stays open down to the underarms. At the underarm the two back edges are lapped over each other and joined, and when the dress is on the yoke holds them closed. Spread out, the neck opening goes round about 46.5 (50, 53.5) cm, and the heads it has to clear are 42.9 (45.8, 48.6) cm: the World Health Organization's head size at 3, 6 and 12 months that only about 2 babies in 100 are bigger than, taking the boys' figures because they are the larger. That leaves at least 2 cm to spare without counting on any stretch.

The armholes are cut in, with no sleeve or cap. Each armhole goes round about 19.5 (20.5, 21.5) cm, at least 5 cm more than the Craft Yarn Council's upper arm at that age, 14 (15.5,

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16.5) cm. A long chain under each arm makes more than a third of the armhole, so the yoke stops at the shoulder and the arm comes out of a plain edge.

What you need

Every tool our patterns use is on the Crochet essentials (https://crochetbabygifts.com/essentials/) page.

- DK (#3) baby yarn in one colour, soft and machine washable, the amount in the size table. A smooth cotton blend shows the V-stitches best.
- A 4 mm crochet hook. The hook size chart (https://crochetbabygifts.com/crochet-hook-size-chart/) gives the US letter near it.
- Five stitch markers, a blunt tapestry needle and scissors.

Nothing is sewn on: this dress has no fastener of any kind, and nothing hangs from it.

Gauge and abbreviations

Gauge: about 18 double crochet and 10 rows to 10 cm (4 in) on a 4 mm hook. We have not measured this on the dress yet. It is a planning figure, and every size on this page is worked out from it. We take a V-stitch round as one double crochet tall, and each V-stitch as two double crochet wide.

The quick check is Row 1: the neck edge should measure about 26.5 (30, 33.5) cm. If it is much longer or shorter, change your hook by half a size.

US crochet terms throughout. The UK name is in brackets.

- ch: chain. sl st: slip stitch. st(s): stitch(es). sk: skip. sp: space.
- sc: single crochet (UK: double crochet). dc: double crochet (UK: treble).
- inc: increase, 2 dc in the same stitch.
- V-st: V-stitch, (dc, ch 1, dc) in the same place. The two dc stand apart like a V, with a ch-1 sp between them.
- V-st between V-sts: a V-st worked into the gap between two V-sts of the round below. It is how the skirt grows.
- 3 (6, 12): the first number is for 3 months, the ones in brackets for 6 and 12 months. A single number is for every size.

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The video

Frisian Knitting's video makes a baby dress on a similar plan: a round yoke worked from the neck down, a V-stitch skirt and a plain edge. It is in English. Her dress is one size in Aran yarn and her counts and construction are her own, so use the video to see how the stitches are made and follow the counts on this page for the sizes.

Watch the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2mkpZiZKJk

Video: Frisian Knitting tutorials, "Crochet baby dress Paris" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k2mkpZiZKJk), 2023, 17 minutes. Her dress is one size in Aran yarn; the counts on this page are our own.

The pattern

The yoke is worked flat in rows from the neck down, which leaves the back open. Rows: ch 2, which does not count as a stitch, then turn. After the yoke the two back edges are lapped and the dress is joined into rounds. Rounds: join with a sl st in the first stitch and do not turn. Start a dc or sc round with ch 2 or ch 1, which does not count as a stitch. Start a V-st round with a sl st into the first ch-1 sp and ch 3, which counts as the first dc of the first V-st.

1. Yoke

Chain loosely, or make the chain on a hook a size bigger: the neck edge has to go over the baby's head.

- Foundation: ch 50 (56, 62) loosely.
- Row 1: dc in 3rd ch from hook and in each ch across. [48 (54, 60) sts]
- Row 2: dc 4 (7, 10), [dc 2, inc] 13 times, dc 5 (8, 11). [61 (67, 73) sts]
- Row 3: dc in each st. [61 (67, 73) sts]
- Row 4: dc 4 (7, 10), [dc 3, inc] 13 times, dc 5 (8, 11). [74 (80, 86) sts]
- Row 5: dc in each st. [74 (80, 86) sts]
- Row 6: dc 4 (7, 10), [dc 4, inc] 13 times, dc 5 (8, 11). [87 (93, 99) sts]
- Row 7: dc in each st. [87 (93, 99) sts]
- Row 8: dc 4 (7, 10), [dc 5, inc] 13 times, dc 5 (8, 11). [100 (106, 112) sts]
- Rows 9–10: dc in each st. [100 (106, 112) sts]

The yoke is 10 rows deep in every size, about 10 cm. Every second row adds 13 stitches, and the plain rows between let the yoke curve round the shoulders.

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2. Joining the yoke

Do not fasten off after Row 10. Ch 2 and turn, so the right side faces you. Lay the edge you are at over the other back edge, so that 4 stitches of each sit on top of each other.

- Rnd 11: dc 4 through both back edges, dc 11 (12, 13), ch 13 (14, 15) for the underarm, skip 22 (23, 24) sts for the armhole, dc 26 (28, 30), ch 13 (14, 15) for the underarm, skip 22 (23, 24) sts for the armhole, dc 11 (12, 13). [78 (84, 90) sts]

Work the first 4 dc through both layers. The skipped stitches and the underarm chain make the armhole. The chain is long on purpose: it cuts the armhole in, so the yoke ends at the shoulder instead of falling over the arm.

3. Skirt

- Rnd 12: [V-st in next st, sk 1, V-st in next st] 26 (28, 30) times. [52 (56, 60) V-sts]
- Rnds 13–15 (13–17, 13–18): V-st in each ch-1 sp. [52 (56, 60) V-sts]
- Rnd 16 (18, 19): [V-st in each ch-1 sp to the marker, V-st between V-sts] 4 times. [56 (60, 64) V-sts]
- Rnds 17–18 (19–20, 20–21): V-st in each ch-1 sp. [56 (60, 64) V-sts]
- Rnds 19–30 (21–32, 22–33): repeat Rnds 16–18 (18–20, 19–21) 4 times. [72 (76, 80) V-sts]

Rnd 12 gathers the skirt: it puts 2 V-sts into every 3 stitches, so the skirt starts fuller than the yoke. Work into each underarm chain as into a stitch. At the end of Rnd 12, put a marker in the ch-1 sp of every 13th (14th, 15th) V-st, so the round is in 4 equal panels; the last marker is at the end of the round. Move the markers up as you go.

In an increase round, work a V-st in each ch-1 sp up to and into the marked one, then one V-st into the gap after it, between the marked V-st and the next. Move the marker into that new V-st. So every third round each panel gains one V-st, and that is what makes the skirt flare.

4. Hem

- Rnd 31 (33, 34): [sc in next ch-1 sp, sc between V-sts] 72 (76, 80) times. [144 (152, 160) sts]
- Rnd 32 (34, 35): sc in each st. [144 (152, 160) sts]

Join with a sl st in the first sc and fasten off. The two sc rounds make the plain edge.

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5. Edging

- Armhole edging: with the right side facing, join at the middle of one underarm chain, ch 1, sc in each ch and in each skipped st round the armhole; join with a sl st in the first sc and fasten off. [35 (37, 39) sts]
- Neck edging: with the right side facing, join at the lower end of one back edge, ch 1, 2 sc in the end of each dc row up to the neck, sc in each st along the neck, then down the other back edge in the same way; fasten off. [88 (94, 100) sts]

Work the armhole edging on both armholes, one sc in each stitch so the edge does not pull in. Weave in every end back and forth through several stitches, then trim it. Turn the dress inside out and check that no strand or loop lies loose inside the skirt.

Made for a baby

- No buttons, beads or snaps. That is why the back of this dress laps over instead of buttoning.
- No cords or ties at the neck. Nothing on this dress hangs or ties.
- Check the open skirt. A V-stitch skirt is full of small holes, and loose threads inside baby clothes can wrap tightly round a finger or toe, a hair tourniquet. Weave every end in well, and before each wear turn the dress inside out and check the skirt for long strands or a broken stitch a finger could catch in.
- Not for sleep. Take the dress off for naps and at night.

The sources for each point are on our handmade baby gift safety checklist (https://crochetbabygifts.com/handmade-baby-gift-safety-checklist/#safety-sources).

Yarn and time

The 6 month dress takes about 370 m of DK. The amounts come from counting every stitch and allowing a published length of yarn per stitch for DK, with each V-stitch counted as two double crochet and a chain, plus the starting chains, the edgings and tails. They are upper estimates, so check the metres on your ball band before you buy.

It is about 4,100 stitches. The skirt takes the longest: it has 21 rounds of V-stitches in the 6 month size.

Frequently asked questions

Can I make it longer? Yes. Work more plain V-stitch rounds before the hem. Each one adds about 1 cm.

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Can I add sleeves? Not to this pattern as written: the armhole is cut in for a sleeveless dress. Our crochet baby dress with a round yoke (https://crochetbabygifts.com/crochet-baby-dress-round-yoke/) has cap sleeves.

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