



Newborn Information

As first-time parents, you may have questions about your new baby. Topics such as feeding your baby, putting him/her to sleep, and treating fevers can cause much worry for you. Below are some tips to help you navigate some common concerns with your newborn, including:

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Feeding

- Breast milk or infant formula gives your baby all the nutrition needed for the first 6 months of life; newborns and infants do not need water or juice. Until your baby starts eating solid food, all the water that your baby needs is obtained from breast milk or formula.
- A baby's nutritional needs during the first year of life are greater than at any other time.
- Babies will triple their birth weight during the first year.
- Feeding your baby provides more than just good nutrition: It gives you a chance to hold your newborn close, cuddle, and make eye contact.

Sleeping

- Newborns sleep an average of 16 to 17 hours a day, but they may only sleep 1-2 hours at a time.
- As children get older the total number of hours they need to sleep decreases.
- At 6 months of age, a baby may still wake during the night, but these awakenings should only last a few minutes and the baby should be able to fall back to sleep on his/her own.
- Babies should sleep on their backs. Babies who sleep on their stomachs are at an increased risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). And don't worry, babies' heads and soft spots are not harmed when a baby sleeps on his/her back.
- Pillows, stuffed animals, quilts, and comforters should not be kept on a baby's bed.
- Although a baby should not lay on their stomach to sleep, "Tummy time" is perfectly safe when a baby is awake!

Consoling Your Baby

- Crying serves several purposes for a baby:
 - It lets the baby call out for help when hungry, wet, or uncomfortable;
 - It enables the baby to shut out sights and sounds that are too intense to handle; and
 - It helps the baby release tension.
- The best way to handle your baby's crying is to respond promptly.
- You cannot spoil a newborn by giving lots of attention and responding to crying.
- If your baby is cold, wet or hungry, respond to the crying by meeting his or her needs (warm up, feed, change diaper).
- If your baby does not fall asleep and remains inconsolable, he or she could be sick. Let your baby's doctor know!

Skin and Nail Care

- Newborn babies have very sensitive skin, and are very susceptible to irritation from chemicals in new clothing, soaps or detergents. Newborns should have all their clothing and bedding washed and double rinsed before being used.
- Newborns normally do not need any lotions, oils, or powders. If your baby has very dry skin, you can use a small amount of non-perfumed baby lotion on the dry areas.
- Do not use any skin care products that are not specifically for babies because they may contain perfumes or chemicals that can irritate a baby's skin.
- Newborns' nails should be kept short and smooth to prevent them from scratching themselves. You can use a soft emery board or baby nail-clippers to trim your baby's nails. It may be easiest to trim nails when the baby is asleep and lying still.

Jaundice

- Jaundice occurs when bilirubin (one of the body's waste products) builds up in the body faster than a baby's developing liver can remove it.
- Jaundice causes skin to turn yellow or orange, and usually develops between 3 to 5 days of life.
- 60% of newborns become jaundiced.
- Feeding your baby frequently (every 2-3 hours) is important since babies get rid of bilirubin through their bowel movements and urine.
- Exposure to sunlight can be helpful in removing bilirubin from a baby's body.
- Jaundice can be monitored with blood tests.

Bowel Movements

- Your baby's first bowel movement is thick, dark-green, or black in color and is called meconium. After the meconium is passed, the stools will turn green to yellow in color.
- Breastfed stools are typically yellow, seedy, loose or runny, and even explosive, while formula-fed stools are usually firmer.
- Frequency of bowel movements vary from baby to baby. Some babies pass stool with each feeding.
- By 3-6 weeks of age, some babies may have only one bowel movement per week.
- If the frequency increases suddenly or the liquid content of stools becomes unusually high, this may be diarrhea.

Diaper Rash

- Diaper rash is caused When skin stays wet for too long and the layers that protect it start to break down.
- To prevent diaper rash, change diapers frequently and gently clean the diaper area with water.
- To treat diaper rash, apply a thick layer of protective ointment or cream each time you change the diaper to form a protective coating on the skin. Pat, do not rub, the diaper area dry. Allow the diaper area to air dry as much as possible before putting on a new diaper.
- Check with your pediatrician IF: (a) The rash develops blisters or pus-filled sores; (b) The rash does not go away within 72 hours; or (c) The rash continues to get worse.

Circumcision

- Circumcision is a surgical procedure in which the skin covering the end of the penis is removed.
- After circumcision, it is common for the tip of the penis to appear raw or yellow.
- Circumcision care involves covering the penis with Neosporin ointment for about 2 days after the procedure.

Caring for the Uncircumcised Penis

- Sometime during the first several years of life, a boy's foreskin will separate from the glans.
- Foreskin retraction should never be forced.
- An uncircumcised penis requires no special care and is easy to keep clean.
- As your son reaches puberty, teach him to retract the foreskin and clean beneath it on a regular basis.

Fever

- Fever is a body temperature that is higher than normal.
- A fever is considered to be 100.4°F (38°C) or higher (taken rectally) in the first 30 days of life.
- A newborn with a fever may feel warm to the touch or may be extremely fussy.

Car Seats

- A rear-facing car seat should be used until your baby is both 2-years-old AND over 20 pounds.
- Your baby should be placed in the car seat in the middle of the back seat.
- Even after your child has grown out of a car seat, the safest place for anyone under age 13 is the back seat.
- Contact Jennifer Rubin at Safe Kids Greater Sacramento for information on car seat checks at 916-864-5684.