

Caring for Your Newborn



In this leaflet are brief guidelines on baby care for you to follow once you take your baby home. If you are a new mother, you will certainly have many questions that are not answered below. In this case, please do not hesitate to ask our nurses or midwives, or your baby's pediatrician for any assistance that you may need.

Breastfeeding

There is no exact guide to how often or how long you should be breastfeeding baby. Rather, the golden rule is to breastfeed baby on demand. This might be tiring at the very beginning, as you may have to put baby on your breast up to 12 times in 24 hours, however after few days, when your milk has come in bigger quantity and baby has learned to suckle, a clearer pattern will develop. During breastfeeding, your baby swallows some air. It is therefore important to help your baby burp in between each breast and after he/she has finished feeding.

Bottle Feeding

You can clean or sterilize the feeding bottles using either a bottle sterilizer, special disinfectant pills, or by simply boiling them in a water pot for at least 5 minutes.

Sleeping Time

Just as with breastfeeding, babies differ in how often and how long they nap, and that is fine. Some babies cat nap and alternate sleep and awake times very frequently, whereas others take long stretches of sleep. Just make sure that during the first 2 weeks, baby does not sleep for stretches longer than 4 hours, as babies still cannot regulate their glucose levels in blood, hence you will need to wake baby up for the next feed. Tiny babies (<2.5 Kg) should be awakened more frequently. By the 3rd month, baby should be sleeping much longer stretches during the night (although can awaken several times still).

Sleeping Position

Worldwide authorities recommend that babies sleep on their backs, as it is the safest position for them. You should avoid placing your child on his/her stomach because it entails a risk, however minute, of sudden death. Try to position the head of the baby to different sides to avoid the "flat head syndrome".



Fingernails & Toe Nails

Trim your baby's nails weekly after a bath when the nails are soft using baby scissors. Round off the corners of the fingernails slightly to prevent scratches to your baby or others. Cut the toenails straight across to prevent ingrown toenails.



Bathing

Make sure the temperature of the room is adequate (ultimately a bit on the cool side, °19C - °24C). Use warm tap water (°37C).

Start with the cleanest parts of the body, meaning the stomach/back area, arms and hands, then the feet, finishing with the "private" parts! Dip him or her in the water. Then wash your baby's hair with a mild baby shampoo. Make sure you dry very well any foldings in between the baby's skin. Bathe your baby daily.

Navel / Cord Care

It is important that you keep baby's umbilical cord stump and surrounding skin clean and dry in order to help prevent infection. Gently clean them once a day simply with a small wet cloth or sponge, with a bit of soap and water during the bath. Wipe away any wet, sticky, or dirty substances. Pat dry the area well. There is no need to wrap the navel, nor to add any gauze to it, nor clean it with special disinfectant. Call your physician if you remark green secretions or redness around the umbilical cord.

Crying

Possible causes of crying are: hunger, tiredness, need to burp or change diaper, colic pain or fever. If all these are ruled out causes, rest assured that many babies cry for no apparent reason, especially at the end of the day when they are tired. When you do, try to give him/her the most comfort, carry him or her, give a lot of love... If rectal fever is 38° C or inferior, or if your baby is inconsolable despite all these efforts, call our helpline or contact your pediatrician.

Colics

As mentioned above, colics can occur in some babies, when babies cry for no apparent reason, around the same hour of the day, some times while pulling their legs to their stomachs, when all other reasons have been ruled out. Colics occur between 2-3 weeks of birth, and up to 4 months, and do not happen during the first 2 weeks of delivery. In case of colics, you can massage baby's stomach gently, or even rub it with oil, or try to hold baby tight. If baby seems inconsolable, consult with your pediatrician.

Diaper Rash

Diaper rash often can develop around the diaper area as baby's skin is still very sensitive. It can make baby's skin red, sore, and irritated. To reduce it, wash baby's skin with soap and water and dry it very well, then air dry several times a day. Do not use wipes or powder. Be careful to change baby's diapers frequently throughout the day. Otherwise, you can use a special zinc oxide cream (prescribed by your physician).

Stuffed Nose

Young babies can only breathe through their nose, which makes them often have stuffy noses. To deal with it or prevent it, place normal physiologic water drops (water and salt) in his/her nostrils daily, after the bath, or as prescribed by your physician.

Baby Massage

There are many benefits from giving your baby a massage: it helps relieve their tummy muscles, teething pains, help boost their muscle development, calm them when they are fussy and sleep better. But most importantly, it will help you (or your husband) bond with baby in a great way. Massage baby in a daily ritual while using a small amount of natural oil.

Warning Signs

- Baby's temperature is over 37.5°C
- Baby has a cough with noisy breathing, is wheezing, or cannot breathe through the nose.
- Difficulty waking up or refusing to eat for 2 to 3 feedings in a row.
- Baby cries in an unusual way or for a long time or seems to be in pain.
- Baby is bleeding from the stump of the cord or from the nose, or has any bruising.
- Baby is vomiting and/or has diarrhoea together (baby is losing too much fluid, and this may need prompt treatment).
- Baby develops jaundice (looks yellow) when he or she is over a week old, or has jaundice which continues for over two weeks after birth.

If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to call us at:

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