

CARING FOR YOUR NEWBORN

Normal Newborn Growth and Development through 8 weeks

Quick Reference:

Frequently asked questions about newborns;

- *How many wet or soiled diapers should my baby have per day?* In the first 24 hours you may see only one wet or poop diaper. In the first 48 hours you should see two, and 3 the 3rd day. These diapers may have meconium in them which is a tar-like consistency. At this point your milk should come in and wet diapers will increase to 6-8 per day. Bowel movements should be a golden brown color.
- *How often should I feed my baby?* You should feed your baby every couple of hours or whenever they demand it. Going more than 4 hours is usually a bad idea since your breasts may become engorged, and this can be a sign of a lethargic baby. You will know if your baby is getting enough milk by how many diapers you are changing!

Your healthy newborn

Don't we all wish that babies came with instructions? Your midwife has checked your baby for neurological and physical health, but now you have been tasked with the day to day care. Luckily, babies are simple little creatures with concrete needs- warmth, food, love, stimulation, and security (). Keeping your baby close to you is easy with the abundance of baby wraps and carriers available now and is the easiest way to make sure you are meeting your baby's need for security, warmth, and love.

Remember that your baby only has one way to communicate- crying. Take a deep breath, usually they are just hungry/wet/tired. But this is your opportunity to begin to learn how to soothe your child.

When to call the Doctor

- **A high temperature** -newborns should stay between 97*-99*. If you take the temperature under their armpit, add a degree. Usually a high or low temp is caused by the baby being over or under dressed. Resolve this and recheck in 15 minutes. If it continues to rise, call the doctor.
- **Dusky, blueish color around the mouth**- this is an indication that your baby is not breathing well or that he is not getting enough oxygen. Call the doctor.
- **Difficulty breathing**- you can spot this because your baby's nostrils might flare, they might grunt or wheeze, the chest might heave or have retractions, and your baby might turn blue. Call the doctor, and they will most likely want you to go to the hospital as this can be a sign of infection.
- **Listless, lethargic, reluctant to nurse**- this can be an indication of jaundice or infection. Call the doctor.
- **Projectile Vomiting**-normal newborns spit up, and the

- *How much should my baby sleep?* Unfortunately newborns do not sleep according to any predictable pattern! It might seem like they sleep all the time, but the important thing is that they have periods of time each day that they are alert, eyes open, and eager to nurse. It is very normal for a newborn to fall asleep at the breast. Change their diaper between sides to wake them up!
- *Is it okay to hold my baby all the time?* Yes! Remember that your baby spent 9 months inside of you and does not have the ability to soothe herself.
- *Why is my baby breathing like that?* Babies breath irregularly with long pauses between breaths, up to 10-12 seconds long. A normal breathing rate is 30-40 breaths per minute, but it can be as high as 60 in the first couple of days. Listen/watch your baby breath for 60 seconds to get their rate.
- *What's up with my baby's skin?* Most babies are pretty red when they are first born, and blueish hands or feet is normal for the first 24 hours. A red blotchy rash may occur over the head and trunk and can last up to 2 months.

amount and frequency is unique to each baby. It is pretty easy to shake up their tummies and elicit the contents onto your shoulder. However, forceful vomiting that shoots out a long-distance is not normal and needs to be evaluated by a pediatrician.

• **Bleeding from the nose, umbilical cord stump, blood in stool or spit up**-these are symptoms of vitamin K deficiency bleeding. If you chose not to get the vitamin K injection you will watch for these warning bleeds as well as unexplained bruising. Call your doctor and head to the hospital immediately.

• **Additional reasons to check in with your doctor:** bulging soft spot, stiff or floppy body, unexplained irritability, jaundice in the first 24 hours or worsening with above symptoms.

More Information about your Newborn

- Your baby's heart rate should be between 110 and 150 beats per minute. You can calculate this by listening to your baby's heart with your head over the chest, or feeling it with your fingers on the chest. Listen/feel for 60 seconds to get the heart rate.
- You may have chosen not to circumcise your son. Do not retract the foreskin for cleaning. Basic soap and water cleansing along with the rest of the body is sufficient.
- The umbilical cord stump takes a few days to dry up and fall off. You may notice a fleshy odor coming from the stump and this is normal. Sometimes the stump is hanging by a thread and you notice what appears to be pus, but this is likely just an area that is still healing and closing up. You can cleanse the area with a cotton swab dipped in sea salt water. No bad odor or redness should be present.
- Do not allow sick people to visit you or your baby.
- Most babies lose a bit of weight after birth but regain it within 7-10 days, then gain about half a pound (5-7 ounces) per week.

Resources

La Leche League- Georgia

There are many gatherings around the Atlanta area to choose from. You will find a comfortable, nonjudgemental group of mothers. You can find a meeting nearest you here: <http://www.llofga.org>

WIC (Women, Infants, & Children)

Nutrition education and supplemental food for pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women who fall below the poverty line or are on Medicaid. 1-800-228-9173

WHO Growth Charts

May be accessed at: https://www.cdc.gov/growthcharts/who_charts.htm

Naturally Healthy Babies and Children by Aviva Jill Romm

This book can be your guide to learning how to intentionally build health in your child, how to treat common problems without medications, and when to know to get help. Highly recommended!

References

Marshall, J., Raynor, M., Fraser, D., & Myles, M. (2014). *Myles Textbook for Midwives*. (16th ed.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone.

Romm, A. (2003). *Naturally healthy babies and children*. Berkeley, Calif.: Celestial Arts.