

Caring for Your Baby

There are some things you need to learn to care for your baby. Talk to your baby's nurse or doctor if you have questions.

Feedings

If you are **breastfeeding** your baby, feed your baby every 2 to 3 hours. Begin breastfeeding for 10 minutes on each breast. Slowly increase the time to 20 minutes on each breast. Burp your baby when changing breasts. Watch the foods you eat. Some things you eat may upset your baby's stomach or cause gas.

If you are **bottle-feeding** your baby, offer formula every 3 to 4 hours. Begin giving your baby 1 to 2 ounces of formula at each feeding. Slowly increase the amount of formula. Burp your baby after every few ounces.

Babies have growth spurts in the first 6 months, and will eat more often during them. Watch for feeding cues and feed your baby whenever your baby wants to eat.

Feeding Cues

Your baby will give you signals of hunger called feeding cues. Your baby's feeding cues may include:

- Clenched fists
- Hands to mouth
- Licking of lips
- Moving of arms and legs
- Turning the head towards your body
- Sucking sounds
- Crying

Your baby will also show signs when he is full such as fingers open, hands down to his side, relaxed arms and legs.

Burping and Spitting Up

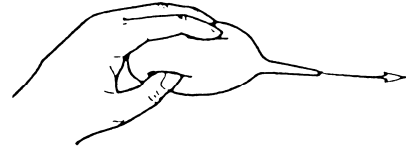
Burp your baby by sitting him upright or holding him up against your chest. Rub or gently pat his back until the air bubble comes up.

It is normal for your baby to spit up small amounts after a feeding or with burping. **Call your baby's doctor** if your baby is spitting up large amounts often or with force.

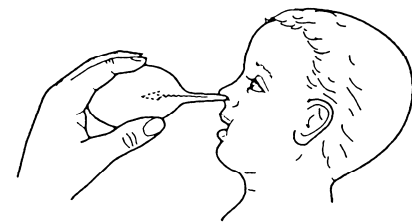
Bulb Syringe

You can use a bulb syringe to clear out mucus from your baby's nose.

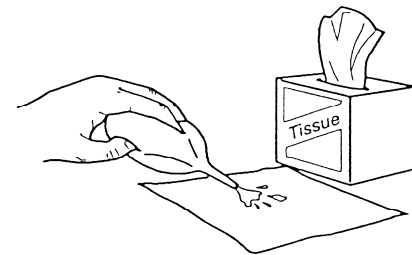
1. Squeeze the air out of the bulb.



2. Gently insert the tip into the nose and then slowly release the bulb. Do not force the tip high into the nose.



3. Remove the bulb and squeeze any fluid into a tissue.



4. Repeat as needed.

5. After you are done, wash the bulb syringe with soap and warm water.

Cord Care

The baby's umbilical cord is clamped at birth. The clamp is removed in the hospital. It takes 7 to 14 days before the cord comes off. Allow the cord to air dry. Until the cord is healed, keep the diaper below the cord. When the cord falls off, there may be a small amount of drainage. Clean

with soap and water until it is healed. **Call your baby's doctor** if the cord has a foul odor, a thick yellow or green discharge or if the skin around it becomes red.

Bowel Movements

Most babies will have a sticky greenish-black bowel movement within 48 hours. The stool will then change to greenish-brown, then to a light yellow, mustard color. Breast milk stool will become watery and mustard in color. Formula stool is more formed and yellow in color.

Once babies are 4 days old, they often have 3 to 4 stools each day. After the first month, your baby may have stools less often. Soft stool is normal.

- **Call your baby's doctor** if your baby has diarrhea or very loose stool for more than 24 hours.
- **Call your baby's doctor** if your baby's stool is very hard or difficult to pass.
- Do not give your baby home remedies or medicine unless told to do so by your baby's doctor.

Urine

Expect 5 to 6 wet diapers each day. Babies can lose fluids very fast. If you think your baby is not getting enough liquids, feed him every 2 hours. **Call your baby's doctor** if your baby is not having enough wet diapers.

Diaper Change

Change the diaper when it becomes wet or dirty. This will help prevent skin rashes. Talk to your baby's doctor or nurse about a product to use if your baby's skin becomes red. Use a wet washcloth or baby wipes to gently clean the area well. Be sure to clean between the folds of the genitalia. Stool and pieces of the diaper can sometimes be found in between these folds, so clean well.

- For girls – Clean the genitalia from front to back. This avoids getting stool into the opening leading to the bladder, which may cause an infection.
- For boys – Gently clean the penis.

Fingernails

Trim the fingernails when your baby is sleeping. Cut nails with round tipped baby nail scissors or clippers. Cut nails straight across, but not too close to the skin. You may round off nail corners with a file. Trim nails at least once a week. Keep your baby's nails short so the skin will not get scratched.

Sleeping

Babies sleep safest on their backs. Place your baby on his or her back to sleep with his or her head uncovered. To prevent flat spots on the back of the head, turn your baby's head different directions with each nap. Do not place your baby on his or her tummy to sleep.

Place your baby on a firm mattress for your baby to breathe safely. Do not place your baby on a soft surface, sofa or waterbed. Remove soft and loose bedding and toys from your baby's sleep area.

Dress your baby in warm sleep clothing to avoid using any blankets. If you do use a blanket, keep blankets and other coverings away from your baby's head. Have the blanket no higher than your baby's chest. Tuck the sides of the blanket under the mattress.

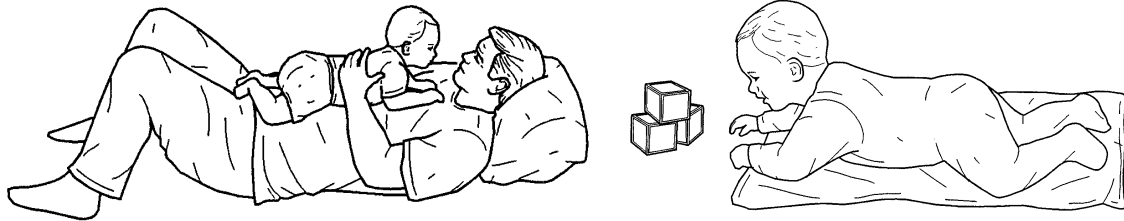
If your baby uses a pacifier, put the pacifier in your baby's mouth. Do not replace it if it falls out during sleep.

Tummy Time

Place your baby on his or her stomach while you spend time with your baby when he or she is awake and ready to play. This will help your baby's muscles in the neck, arms and body get stronger. It also helps your baby avoid flat spots on his or her head, and help your baby learn how to roll, sit,



crawl, and pull to stand. Start out with just a few minutes at a time, a few times each day. Increase the time as your baby gets used to it and begins to like it. Play with your baby in this position. **Never leave your baby alone on his or her stomach.**



Room Temperature and Dress

Dress your baby with one extra layer more than you are wearing. Do not overdress your baby or let him get too warm. Your baby's room should be at a temperature that is comfortable for an adult. Air conditioning is not harmful to your baby, but keep your baby away from fans and drafts.

Your Baby's Temperature

Take your baby's temperature if your baby is eating poorly, feels warm to the touch, is more irritable or is hard to wake. With new babies, a temperature below 97 degrees or above 100 degrees Fahrenheit may be a sign of an infection. Most doctors want you to take your baby's temperature under the arm, called an axillary temperature. Normal axillary temperature is 97.6 degrees Fahrenheit.

Call your baby's doctor if your baby's temperature is over 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit. Remove extra layers of clothing and blankets and recheck your baby's temperature in 30 minutes.

Crying

Most babies cry a little each day. Crying is a way of communicating needs, such as hunger, wet, thirsty, cold or bored. It can also be a way to release tension.

With healthy babies, it is normal:

- For the crying to come and go. This most often occurs in the first 3 to 4 months.

- For the baby to keep crying when you are trying to comfort them.
- For crying to happen more in the evening hours when baby is tired.
- For your baby to have a red face, clenched fists, hard and tight stomach, arched back, legs pulled up to their stomach or stiff legs.
- For the crying to last a long time.

A crying baby can frustrate and worry parents. Crying often makes parents think there is something wrong. Understanding what is normal will not make your baby stop crying, but it can make you feel better about yourself and your baby. Always check with your doctor if your baby cries more than you think your baby should.

Soothing a Crying Baby

Respond to the crying quickly to prevent your baby from becoming too upset. This will not spoil your baby. **Never shake your baby.** This causes serious injuries. Get help or take a break before you get too upset.

Try these actions to calm your baby:

- Cuddle or swaddle your baby in a blanket and hold him close to you.
- Place your baby's head near your heart.
- Let your baby suck on his or her finger or a pacifier.
- Rock, walk with your baby or take him or her for a ride in a stroller or a car.
- Talk to your baby in a steady, soft voice.
- Sing, hum or coo softly to your baby.
- Turn on something with a rhythmic sound such as music, a fan, and clothes dryer.
- Keep the lights low and the room quiet.

Try to stay calm. Take a break. A crying baby can be stressful. Have someone watch and comfort your baby while you relax. **Call your baby's doctor** for advice if you feel your baby:

- Cries too much
- Has cries that are loud, piercing or do not stop

- Cries more than 3 hours each day and more often than 3 days each week

Shaken Baby Syndrome

Shaken Baby Syndrome is brain damage caused by someone shaking a baby even one time. Normal playing with a child, like bouncing the baby gently on a knee, will not cause brain damage, but **never shake a baby**. Make sure to tell anyone caring for your baby to never shake your baby.

Pacifiers

Babies like to suck. Pacifiers can help calm babies. If you are breastfeeding, do not use a pacifier until your baby is breastfeeding well. Never use a string to attach the pacifier around your baby's neck. Do not use a bottle nipple as a pacifier.

Bathing

You may give your baby a sponge bath. Do not put your baby into a tub of water until the cord falls off, the umbilical area heals and the circumcision heals for boys.

The temperature of the water should be 100 degrees Fahrenheit or 37 degrees Celsius to prevent chilling or burning. If you do not have a bath thermometer, use your wrist to test the water. It should feel warm, **not** hot. The room should be free of drafts, such as open windows or fans.

Never leave your baby alone, even for a second. If the telephone rings or someone knocks on the door ignore it and finish the bath. Accidents can occur quickly. Always support your baby's head during the bath. Keep a firm grip on your baby. A soapy baby can be very slippery.

Bathe your baby every 3 to 4 days. It is best to bathe your baby before a feeding.

Washing Baby's Clothes

In the first few months, a detergent made for a baby, such as Dreft or Ivory Snow may be used because it is gentle on a baby's skin. You may also use detergent without fragrance. Do not use bleach because it can irritate your baby's skin.

Vaccines

Vaccines help prevent diseases. These are given in the doctor's offices and health clinics. To protect your baby's health, vaccines should be given on a schedule. Be sure that your baby gets all his or her vaccines. Take the vaccine record with you to all doctors' appointments. Vaccines for children are free through your local health department.

When Should I Call My Baby's Doctor?

- **Call 911** if your baby turns blue or has trouble breathing.
- **Call your baby's doctor** if your baby has any of the following:
 - ▶ Cries non-stop or is more irritable
 - ▶ A temperature above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit under the arm
 - ▶ Frequent discharge from the eyes
 - ▶ A hard time breathing
 - ▶ Yellowing or rash on the skin that gets worse
 - ▶ Redness discharge or a foul smell from the umbilical cord
 - ▶ Baby is breastfeeding less often or taking less formula for more than 8 hours
 - ▶ Green vomit or vomiting after more than two feedings in a row
 - ▶ Baby is hard to wake up
 - ▶ No wet diaper for more than 8 hours
 - ▶ Change in stool patterns, constipation or diarrhea.
 - ▶ Cough that will not go away, especially if there is a rash.

Talk to your baby's doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.

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