

PEDIATRIC SOLUTIONS, S.C.

Stephanie S. Baker, M.D.

Satish Charo, M.D.

Carissa J. Lee Holmes, M.D.

Facts About Caring for Your Newborn

Congratulations on your new addition! We at Pediatric Solutions have put together some general information about your newborn but feel free to call us any time you have a question. Also, look for our page on Facebook!

When to Call the Doctor

- Fever – a rectal temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher is considered a fever for newborns. Only rectal temperatures are reliable until the age of 1 year. If you have an elevated temperature that is not rectal, please do a rectal temp before calling the doctor.
- Forceful vomiting – all children under 6 months will spit up somewhat, but if they truly vomit with force, call us.
- Persistent cough – especially if interfering with feeding. Babies often sneeze, sound congested, or have the sniffles or hiccups, but they should not be coughing.
- Not feeding normally – for any reason
- Over-sleeping, difficulty waking to feed, and increased irritability.
- Never assume that a baby that does not have a fever is not sick. Even without a fever, if you feel that your baby does not look or act right, err on the side of calling us.

Feeding Baby

- Breastfeeding – Breast milk is the perfect food for babies! It nourishes as well as protects against infection. Women should breastfeed (or pump and feed out of a bottle) as much as possible during the first 6 months of life.
- Over the first week of breastfeeding, the milk usually becomes more liquid and increases in volume. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids. It is OK to supplement after breastfeeding with pumped breast milk or formula.
- Feed a baby when they seem hungry, which is usually every 2 to 3 hours. Virtually all babies lose weight during the first few days of life. Babies should be fed every 3 hours (day and night) until they exceed their birth weight, which usually occurs at 7-10 days old.
- Bottle feeding – Formula is also very safe nutrition for babies if parents choose. The brand you choose does not really matter as long as your baby will drink it. Formula fed babies tend to eat a little less often, from every 2 to 4 hours. You do not need to sterilize bottles in the US – the water is safe! Wash bottles as you would any dishes. Burp your baby after feeding to improve comfort and reduce spit up by getting rid of swallowed air.
- Babies need no solid food until 5-6 months of age. Until then, they cannot digest any foods besides breast milk or formula. Never give pure honey to babies under one year.

Voiding and Stooling

- Breastfed babies can have a stool with every feeding in the first few weeks. It is usually watery, with seedy-looking yellow components. Formula-fed babies' stools are more solid. Babies should have at least 6 wet diapers daily. If your baby is not wetting this many times, please call us.
- Eventually, babies will have a few bowel movements a day or a few per week. It is OK for a baby to go a few days without a bowel movement. Call if it has been 5 or more days without a bowel movement, if there is blood in the stool, or if your baby seems very uncomfortable.

Skin and Umbilical Cord Care

- When the cord falls off it will shrivel up, look goey, and may bleed a little. Only give sponge baths until cord is off and dry.
- Call if the cord has a large amount of discharge, or if the skin around cord looks red (especially if the baby is fussy), or if the cord has not fallen off within 2 weeks.
- Most babies have rashes in the first 4 months as the skin matures. Most babies will have some degree of skin peeling the first two weeks. A mild lotion, Vaseline or Aquaphor can be used but this may or may not help the peeling.
- It is very common to have a red rash in the diaper area. This is from irritation from stool. Apply Desitin. Triple Paste or Butt paste if they have a diaper rash. Add Vaseline or Aquaphor on top. If it is still not better after a few days, call us for an appointment.
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- Many babies appear yellow after birth called jaundice. It is caused by the breakdown of newborn blood cells and the slow maturation of the liver's ability to metabolize and excrete the pigment bilirubin. Until the body can better handle these pigments, they are deposited in the skin. Jaundice is rarely a problem for healthy newborns after the first few days, but please call us if the yellow color appears to be worsening.

Vitamin D Supplements

All breastfed babies (and some formula fed babies) need extra vitamin D to prevent rickets (abnormal bending of the bones). Once a day give 1ml of Poly-vi-sol, Tri-vi-sol, D-vi-sol or other over the counter Vitamin D drops. Another option is concentrated Baby D Drops. The dose for these is only 1 drop on the tongue once a day.

Baby's Genitals

Wash with warm water and gentle soap. Both boys and girls can initially have little breast buds soon after birth due to maternal hormones. Girls can have a small amount of blood from the vagina or some milk from the breast area. This is normal, again due to maternal hormones, and can last up to a few weeks.

Stuffy Noses, Sneezing, and Congestion

All of these are very common during the 1st few months because they have a small nose and do not breath through their mouth often. To clean baby's nose, place 1 drop of nasal saline in each side then suction with a bulb syringe or the Nose Freda system. If your baby is having difficulty feeding due to their congestion, please call us.

Car Seats

Newborns must be in car seats, strapped in correctly in the back seat facing backwards until they are 2 years old. Please read our separate handout on car seats for more information.

Sleep positioning

All babies should be placed on their back to sleep without any blankets, stuffed toys or sleep positioners in the crib or bassinet. Studies have shown a decreased risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) when babies sleep on their back. When the baby is awake, however, do give the baby some tummy time to develop their trunk muscles. Infant sleep sacks are an alternative to loose blankets to keep babies swaddled and warm.

Crying

Newborns can cry for 1 – 4 hours a day or more. Crying helps communicate what a baby needs – they may be cold, hungry or need a diaper change. If you have fed, changed and warmed your baby, and they are still crying very hard – check if clothing or a strap is making them uncomfortable or if there is a hair caught around their finger or toe. Babies also cry when they are sick, so check for a fever, congestion, cough or rash. Some babies still cry after you have addressed all these potential issues. Things you can try are:

Rock your baby in your arms

Gently stroke your baby's head or pat their chest

Wrap them snugly in a blanket or swaddle wrap

Sing or talk to your baby

Play soft music or white noise

Walk with your baby in your arms, a carrier or a stroller

Give your baby a warm bath

If none of these help, leave your baby alone in a safe place such as a crib. Many babies cry before they fall asleep. If you feel you cannot handle the situation, leave your baby in a safe place and call a friend or family member for help. Never shake or hit your baby - this can cause blindness, brain damage or even death.