

During your first weeks at home, your lives will be going through many changes. Many parents have questions about how to care for their infant and what to expect. Please ask any questions during your hospital stay. If you have questions when you get home, call your infant's doctor. The following guidelines are designed to help you in your first weeks at home. Remember, these are guidelines. If anything differs from the doctor's instructions, please follow his or her instructions.

Positioning and Airway Clearance

Infants tend to have mucus in their systems during their first days as they get used to breastmilk or formula. They may spit up as a result. In order to avoid choking, we recommend placing your baby on his or her back or side.

Cord Care

The cord will fall off in a few weeks. Until then, keep it clean and dry. Call your doctor's office if the cord is leaking yellow pus, has a bad odor, or if the skin around the cord is red. These could be signs of infection.

Bathing

Your baby should be sponge-bathed until the cord has dried and fallen off. After that, a tub bath every other day is fine. We suggest you use a mild soap or baby bath.

Never leave your baby alone. Your baby could roll easily. If you need to leave for any reason, take your baby with you.



Some Tips for Bathing:

- ✓ Lay out things for bath. Include bowl for water, soap, alcohol, cotton balls, clean diapers, clean clothes, a small cup for rinsing the baby's hair, washcloth, and 2 towels.
- ✓ Keep the room warm.
- ✓ Put warm water in the bowl.
- ✓ Lay the baby on a towel.
- ✓ Take clothes off baby and keep baby warm.
- ✓ Test the water with your wrist to be sure it's not too hot for the baby.
- ✓ Wash the baby from head to toe.
- ✓ Washing hair: If your baby doesn't like water in his face, you may hold the baby in a football hold (under your arm) over the bath water, and use a plastic cup to pour water over the baby's hair.
- ✓ Brush baby's hair everyday to prevent cradle cap.
- ✓ Avoid baby powder and oil.



Jaundice

Jaundice is a yellow color to your baby's skin, caused by an excess amount of bilirubin. Bilirubin is released when red blood cells are broken down. It is a natural process for your baby's body to break down red blood cells and release the bilirubin. Since many organs in your new baby are not fully developed, it takes longer for your baby to get rid of the bilirubin. Jaundice usually starts in your baby's face and moves downward. If you notice your baby's skin seems more yellow, the whites of his or her eyes are yellow, or your baby is sleepier and having fewer bowel movements, call your baby's doctor.

Infant Behaviors

- Crying is the normal way for your baby to communicate his needs. Crying also helps get air into the baby's lungs. Babies cry to let you know they are hungry, need a diaper change, need to be held, or are too hot or too cold. It is OK to comfort a baby when he or she cries. Parents cannot spoil a baby by comforting his cries. If baby continues to cry, try the following:
- Feed baby if he or she is hungry.
- Pat his or her back and talk to the baby.
- Change the baby's position and/or scenery.
- Try soothing music, massaging baby, or bundling him up snugly in a receiving blanket.
- Try rocking, holding, walking, or car rides.
- Remember, each day you get to know your baby better. You will soon learn why she cries and how to comfort her.



Helpful information

- Other behaviors that are normal for your baby include sneezing and hiccuping.
- Some babies get breast engorgement, which is caused by hormones from the mother. This will soon absorb into the baby's body.
- Baby girls sometimes have a "mini period," where you might see small amounts of blood on a diaper. This is normal.
- Babies need to be held. *Always feed your baby while holding the bottle.* Never prop a bottle for feedings.
- When preparing baby formula, never add more or less water than the label says. This can be harmful to your baby.
- Contact your doctor if your baby has problems with the formula, such as spitting up large amounts, or increased fussiness.



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Caring for Your New Baby

