

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, you may need to feed your baby every hour for the first few days. Later on, your baby can go 3 to 4 hours without breastfeeding. Let your baby nurse on the first breast as long as possible, then offer the second breast. Some babies nurse quickly, in 15 minutes, others take more time, like 30 minutes. This is all normal. 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 3 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, turning head away or biting the nipple.

Burping and Spitting Up

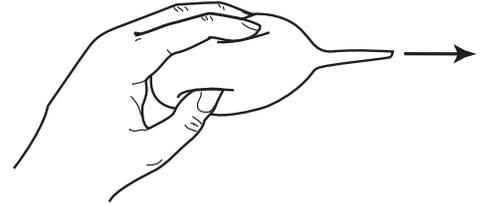
Burp your baby by sitting him upright or holding him up against your chest. Rub or gently pat his back until the air bubble comes up.

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.

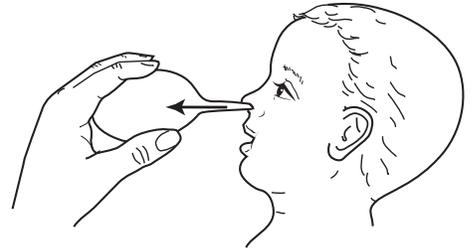
Bulb Syringe

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

1. Squeeze the air out of the bulb.

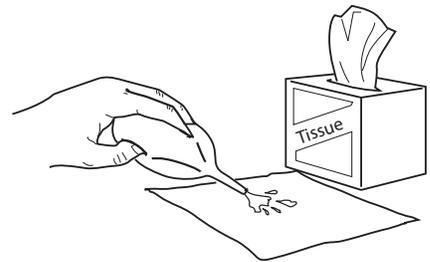


2. Gently insert the tip into the nose and then slowly release the bulb. Do not force the tip high into the nose.



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.

Be gentle and do not use the bulb syringe too much. This can cause your baby's nose to swell. Suctioning the sides of your baby's mouth in the cheek area can be a better option, but be careful not to suction the back of the mouth or throat, which can cause gagging.

Cord Care

The baby's umbilical cord is clamped at birth. The clamp is removed in the hospital. It usually takes 7 to 14 days before the cord falls off by itself. Do not try to remove the cord. Until the cord is healed, keep the diaper below the cord.

Keep the area clean, dry and open to the air. If the area becomes dirty with urine or poop, sponge bathe the area gently with warm water and pat or air dry. Do not put your baby in a tub of water until the area has healed.

When the cord falls off, there may be a small amount of drainage or a few drops of blood. **Call your baby's doctor** if the cord smells bad, has yellow or green discharge, is bleeding more than a few drops, or if the skin around it becomes red or seems painful to the baby.

Bowel Movements

Most babies will have a sticky and dark bowel movement within 48 hours. The stool will 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. As long as your baby is comfortable, do not worry about how often they have bowel movements. 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 by the time the baby is 5 days old. 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 and between the folds of skin and genitals.

- 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. If not circumcised, do not pull back on the foreskin to clean it.

Fingernails

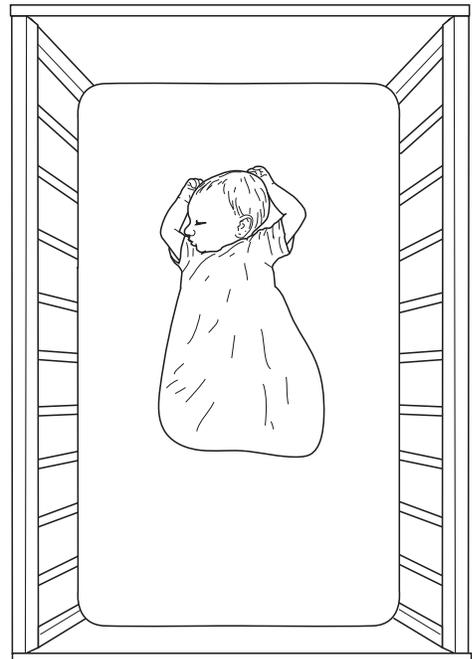
Keep your baby's nails short so they do not scratch themselves. Find a position that lets you access your baby's hands. It is best to use a nail file (emery board) instead of baby nail scissors or clippers. Gently rub back and forth with the file until the nail is short and smooth. Use care not to file the baby's skin. If you use baby nail clippers, be careful not to clip the baby's skin.

Sleeping

Always put your baby on his or her back for sleeping.

Follow the ABC's of safe sleep:

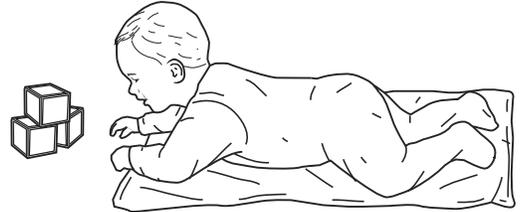
- ALONE- babies need to sleep on their own surface. Bed sharing is not safe.
- BACK- babies should be on their back for every sleep.
- CRIB- the crib should be empty. This means no toys, no bumper pads, no pillows, no blankets, no stuffed animals and no supplies.



Having your baby in a onesie sleeper or sleep sack is safest. Pacifiers are okay as long as they are not hanging around your baby's neck.

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. There are different ways to take a temperature, but in the baby's bottom (rectal) is thought to give the best reading for babies.

Call your baby's doctor if you think he or she may have a fever. In general:

- Babies younger than 3 months - a rectal temperature of 100.4° F (38° C) or higher, or an armpit (axillary) temperature of 99° F (37.2° C) or higher.

Crying

All babies cry. Crying is how babies let you know they are hungry, 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.
- 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 or clothes dryer. Do not place the baby on the 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
- Cries 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 hang 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. The rest of the time, cleaning after each diaper change and washing baby's face and neck after feedings are enough.

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
 - › Has a fever
 - › Discharge from the eyes often
 - › A hard time breathing, breathing very fast or the skin below or between the ribs pulls in when baby breathes
 - › Dry, rough patches on the body, blisters or sores that crust over or a rash that comes on all of a sudden
 - › 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.