



Caring For a Newborn

MY BABY BREATHES LOUDLY AND SOMETIMES SOUNDS CONGESTED – IS THIS NORMAL? SOMETIMES SHE BREATHES VERY QUICKLY – IS SHE SICK?

A baby's breathing passages are so small that just a small amount of mucus creates a lot of noise with breathing. Mild nasal congestion, hiccups, and frequent sneezing are perfectly normal in a newborn. A little spit-up (even through the nose!) is normal too. It is also normal for a newborn to breathe very quickly for brief periods of time, and then have slower breathing, or even pause for a few seconds. Call us right away if she stops breathing for more than 10-15 seconds, turns blue, or is breathing hard and fast (more than 70 breaths per minute) persistently.

MY BABY'S SKIN IS PEELING ALL OVER – IS THIS NORMAL? DO I NEED TO USE BABY OIL OR LOTION?

Your newborn just spent 9 months immersed in a liquid environment. Dry, peeling skin is perfectly normal and does not need to be treated with oil or lotion.

MY BABY'S SKIN IS LOOKING YELLOW – SHOULD I WORRY?

Many newborns have a mild degree of jaundice (yellow skin) on their face and eyes, which has no risk to the baby. But more severe jaundice can be dangerous. One of the main reasons we like to follow up with a newborn within a few days after birth is to check the skin color. If you notice that your baby is becoming more and more yellow, call us to make an appointment immediately, so we can take a look.

HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE THE CORD TO FALL OFF?

The cord stump usually falls off in the first few weeks, leaving a bit of blood, some wet yellow fluid and a bit of odor. After the cord falls off, it usually dries up within a week to look like a normal belly button if it's left alone. Call us if that doesn't seem to be happening, or right away if you see that that skin around the cord is red or swollen. We don't recommend routine cleaning with alcohol – it doesn't help and can make the cord take longer to fall off.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD MY NEWBORN POOP?

The first couple of days after birth, your baby will pass a sticky green-black stool called meconium. After the meconium has passed, the stools will typically become yellow or brown and quite loose/liquid and might look "seedy". By the 3rd or 4th day, most breastfed infants will have at least 3-4 stools each day, and many infants will poop every time they eat, even up to 20 times a day. Babies who drink only formula usually have less frequent bowel movements, maybe only once a day. The color (yellow, brown, or green) and number of stools can vary from day to day, and there is a wide range of normal. Breast-fed babies over 3-4 weeks of age may only poop once or twice a week. If the poop is soft and the baby seems fine, don't worry!!

IS THAT BLOOD IN MY BABY'S DIAPER?

Male and female newborns will occasionally pass a brick reddish substance with the urine that stains the diaper. This is not cause for alarm and usually only happens once or twice. Make sure your baby is being fed every 2-3 hours to stay well hydrated. Newborn girls may have discharge from the vagina, which can be bloody. This is caused by withdrawal from Mom's hormones, and resolves within a few days. You can gently clean the area with a clean cloth or wipe, from front to back. You can leave the white protective mucus that is in the vagina, unless it has poop on it.



Bayside Medical Group

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WHAT DO I DO IF MY NIPPLES HURT WHEN I BREASTFEED?

It is normal to feel pain for the first couple of seconds when the baby latches on, and this typically gets better after the first week or two as your body adjusts to breastfeeding. If the pain lasts longer than a few seconds, or if your nipples are bleeding, please ask us for help. Your baby may need to learn to adjust his latch.

WHY DID MY BABY LOSE WEIGHT AFTER BIRTH?

Almost all babies lose weight during their first few days of life outside of the womb, then start to gain and are back to birth weight by the end of the first week or two. They are born with extra "water" weight to keep them hydrated during the first few days of life while Mom's milk supply is coming in. We will tell you if we are concerned that the weight loss is too much.

CAN MY BABY SEE ME, AND DOES SHE KNOW WHO I AM?

Newborns are not blind, but their vision isn't very sharp yet. They can see best at a distance of about 1 foot, which happens to be the distance from your breast to your face. Your baby will recognize your face and your scent almost immediately after birth. She also will quickly recognize the faces and voices of close family members.

WHEN SHOULD I BRING MY NEWBORN TO THE PEDIATRICIAN?

We like to see newborns about 2 days after leaving the hospital, mainly to check the baby's weight, color, and heart. After that visit, we will advise you on when to follow up for the next visit. We will need to see your newborn right away if she has a fever over 100 degrees rectally. You do not need to check your baby's temperature unless she feels hot, or seems sick. Call us for advice if your baby is very fussy or irritable, lethargic, is not eating well, or if the skin is increasingly yellow. Call us if your baby is not having at least 3 wet diapers in 24 hours or if he is not having normal bowel movements (see above).

For safety, please place your baby on her back to sleep and do not use pillows or blankets. Call 1-866-SEATCHECK or go to www.seatcheck.org for a free car seat inspection.

Here are a few other helpful websites:

- For general advice: American Academy of Pediatrics website: www.healthychildren.org
- For information on medicines while breastfeeding:
LACTmed <http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov/cgi-bin/sis/htmlgen?LACT>
LACTmed is also available, and easier to use, as a smartphone app.
- And of course, you can always call us whenever you have a question. <http://baysidemedical.com> has the addresses and phone numbers for all our offices, and information about our clinicians.

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PEDIATRICS

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