

Journey of Birth

Prenatal Education

Elimination Communication Guide

Practical guidance to learn your
baby's elimination cues &
communication to respond with
attunement.

Basics of Elimination in a Newborn Baby

Newborns pee and poo a lot! Initially it can be unpredictable, which makes this the perfect time to learn more about their cues (what do they do **before** they pee or poo) so you can learn how to read their communication.

In the first few days baby pees and eliminates meconium. By day 5 or so, you can expect pees every 1-3 hours, and 3-4 poos (or more!) a day.

What to do

Observe patterns and offer opportunities. Babies can eliminate into a potty, container, sink or toilet from birth. You can hold your baby to pee or poo based on timing (like right after waking, or after a feed) or based on signs you notice.

After about a month old...

Breastfed babies bowel movements become less predictable, and some babies will not have a bowel movement every day.

As your baby grows...

They will learn to wait for you to take them to pee or poo, once they have learned your shared communication and your responsiveness to their needs.

How this helps their toileting in the long run...

Your baby is flexible in where and how they eliminate right from birth, so they don't need the same toilet training as a baby who has solely used diapers. They are also already attuned to their own body's needs, and to communicating with you about those needs.

How to Start

Keep it low-pressure and manageable

Choose one or two predictable times to offer the potty, such as during diaper changes, or upon waking

Watch and learn baby's patterns and signals

Try offering without forcing or holding baby in position for long periods

Use a diaper as backup, or folded towel under baby

Helpful Supplies

One of the best parts of elimination communication is how inexpensive it can be and how little is needed. A few things might make it easier:

- soaker pads (2-3) to put under your baby when they're diaper free to protect the furniture, car seat, carrier etc.
- old towels, or pre-fold (flat) cloth diapers to hold between baby and you, to avoid being peed on
- a few suitable containers to catch pee and poo (check the thrift store kitchen section) Some people buy a "top hat" style newborn potty
- a sturdy plastic potty
- back up diapers for days you aren't up for elimination communication
- easy to take off pants for baby, or easy access clothes
- a carrier that you can easily/quickly get baby out of

What Does Elimination Communication Look Like

Cue: Baby shows a signal or you recognize a likely elimination time.

Response: Offer a potty, toilet, sink, or other appropriate place for elimination.

Communication: Use a consistent sound or word (e.g., "psss" for pee).

Let go: If nothing happens, simply move on—no pressure or frustration.

Be Self-Aware

Notice your own capacity, ease, and acceptance of messes and misses on any given day.

If you're over-tired, impatient, or you and/or baby are having a hard day, one of you is sick, or your routines are affected by other factors, it might be a good choice to **take a break** from elimination communication for the day.

Pee and Poo Log

Use this log (with examples) to track your baby's elimination and any behaviour cues (such as squirming, fussing, facial expressions) or timing cues (such as right after waking, during a feed) that you notice:

Time	Feed	Sleep/Wake	Pee	Poo	Cue/Behaviour	Offered?	Result
6:23	yes.	woke up.	yes	no.	squirmed.	yes.	peed
8:02.	no.	awake.	yes.	yes	fussing.	yes.	both

When Are Babies Most Likely to Go?

Upon waking - usually within a few minutes of waking up

During or after feeding - eating stimulates the digestive system which promotes elimination. Maybe babies will have a bowel movement in the middle of a feed

Shortly after being taken out of a carrier/car seat - the change of environment and position can provoke elimination

During diaper changes - the cold air when taking off a diaper can prompt a baby to pee

When you notice a predictable pattern - in time, your baby's elimination patterns become clearer

When baby gives a recognizable cue - this could be squirming, grunting, shivering, fussing etc

Tip: Keeping a simple 2-3 day observation log can help you discover your baby's patterns.

Gentle & Easeful - Following Baby's Lead and Communication

If your baby is communicating "no" by fussing, squirming or resisting the potty or offer to eliminate, trust their communication

Provide physical support and positions appropriate to baby's age and development

Elimination communication should never feel frustrating or forceful - if you notice frustration over missed pees and poos, or your baby is resistant, take a break

Diapers are always an appropriate backup - or you can use soaker pads, towels etc to avoid soiling on furniture or people

If you have concerns about urination, bowel movements, constipation, pain, or unusually few wet diapers, seek advice from your healthcare professional.

Learning Baby's Signals

Signals vary between babies. Examples include:

Squirming, grunting, or suddenly becoming still

Facial expressions or changes in breathing

Fussiness or suddenly stopping an activity

Looking at or reaching toward the caregiver

A predictable "I need to go" behaviour

A cue isn't always obvious—and cues can change as babies grow.

Remember that **elimination communication is mostly about COMMUNICATION with your baby, and deepening your presence with them and attunement to their needs**. Providing them an alternative option for elimination outside of diapers helps your baby develop more flexibility for future potty use as they grow, and deepens your ability to understand their experience and needs.