

Newborn Care

Sleeping

Your baby will sleep between 12 and 20 hours in a 24 hour period. He or she may wake several times in the night. Before baby's are born they often are more active at night when mom settles down. It may take several weeks after birth for the baby to adjust to your schedule. Do not let your baby sleep for prolonged periods (more than 4 hours) during the first week. New baby's need to eat frequently. Babies have different states of sleep, and may sleep more soundly at some times than others.

To help turn days and nights around, place newborn in direct sunlight 3 times a day for 5 minutes. Save bath time for late in the day, about an hour before you want to go to bed.

Feeding

If you are breast feeding, your baby will eat every 1 1/2 hours to every 3 hours. Until your milk comes in, you should nurse the baby every 2 hours. You should nurse until the baby is finished at each breast and burp the baby in between breasts. Breast milk is completely assimilated in 90 minutes and new baby's do not have enough energy stores to go prolonged periods without eating. Nursing frequently will ensure that you have an adequate milk supply. The baby may get a sucking blister on it's lip. Do not try to peel it off. It is common for babies to spit up during or after a feeding. If your baby has a tendency to spit up, make sure you are burping him or her well, and handling your baby gently after feedings.

Umbilical cord

The umbilical cord will dry up and fall off between the first and third week. It is important to keep it clean and dry. Do not clean it with alcohol or peroxide because they will wash off the enzymes that help the cord to dry and fall off. After it falls off the area may be cleaned with peroxide. If it oozes green pus, smells bad, or is very red around it, call your practitioner.

Bowel movements

Your baby should have it's first bowel movement within 24 hours after birth. It will be thick and tar like. The first bowel movements are called meconium. The first couple of days the stools will be a mixture of meconium and milk by-products. Breast fed babies stools are yellowish green, mustard colored, and may have small cottage cheese like curds in them.

Alert times

During your babies alert times, he or she can see objects 7 to 18 inches away. This is a good time to make eye contact and bond with your baby . The newborn can follow slowly moving objects with his eyes. Your baby knows your voice, and other familiar voices and sounds.

Overstimulation

Your baby is adjusting to a lot of new stimuli - smells, lights, sight, noise, touch, taste. He or she is making a lot of adjustments being outside the womb. If the baby is overstimulated it may throw up or become very irritable. It is a good idea not to pass the baby around from person to person because this is very overstimulating to a baby. The baby should be kept out of the wind, and out from underneath a fan.

Illness

What may be a common cold for an older child can be a devastating illness for a new baby. Keep your baby away from people who are sick!