

Getting to Know Your Newborn

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by Mary Gibbons

How your baby will look:

Color

Your babies face and body should be pink. It is normal for the baby to have blue feet and blue hands in the first 24 hours. It is normal for a baby to be jaundiced by day 3, and it peaks on day 5. It will start in the face, move down the torso, and then down the limbs. It then leaves the opposite way. You should take the baby into direct sunlight 3 times a day for 10 minutes to help with jaundice. If your baby becomes yellow in the first 24, seems very yellow or is lethargic contact a pediatrician.

Skin

A lot of babies are born with a cheesy white substance on them. It is called vernix, and has protected their skin from the amniotic fluid. It is very moisturizing and you can rub it into their body. Sometimes if your baby is overdue their skin may be peeling. You can use olive oil or coconut oil on their skin. Many baby lotions contain harmful fragrances and colorings that will irritate your babies skin.

Eyes

Your baby can focus about 10-12 inches at birth, this is the distance they are from your face during nursing! Most newborns have dark blue eyes that will change in the first few weeks or months. Sometimes your baby will have broken blood vessels in their eyes from the pressure from birth. This is normal and will usually go away by the time they are 1 month old.

Genitals

Your baby may have enlarged genitals. Sometimes you may see a drop of blood coming from a baby girls vagina. This is caused by hormones and is normal.

Cord

You do not need to put anything on your babies cord. It will dry out and fall off in 7-14 days. Make sure that you fold the diaper under the babies cord until it has fallen off.

How your baby will act:

Sleep

A newborn baby will sleep a lot. They can sleep for 20 hours out of every 24. Many moms like to sleep with their babies. It can be more restful for the mom to not have to get up to feed the baby, and the baby will sleep longer next to her. A lot of mothers say that they wake a second before the baby does and can start nursing immediately before the baby even has to cry. Some studies show that sleeping with your baby reduces the chance of you ovulating. If you decide to sleep with your baby make sure that your mattress is firm and that you don't have pillows or blankets around the baby. It is safest to put the baby on the moms side, a dad

Getting to Know Your Newborn

does not have the same intuition that the baby is in the bed. Make sure that the baby can not roll off the bed. Do not drink alcohol or take sleep aids or other drugs if you sleep with your baby. Your baby should sleep on its back to prevent SIDS. Do not keep heavy blankets or stuffed animals in your baby's bed.

Sometimes a baby will have its night and days turned around. Take your baby into direct sunlight 3 times a day for 10 minutes. Give them a bath in the evening.

Emotions, Crying

Newborn babies communicate by crying. It is very normal for them to cry a lot. If they have a high pitched, screaming cry, make sure that nothing is hurting or pinching them. If it continues you may want to have them checked by a pediatrician. New babies love to be held. You can not spoil them by holding them too much. You will never look back and think "I wish I didn't hold my baby so much". I recommend buying a sling. Studies show that babies that are held a lot or more content, they feel more safe and secure, and they cry less. Because they have been curled up and held tight by your womb, many babies feel secure when they are swaddled.

Breathing

The baby should breathe between 30-60 breaths per minute. It is very light. If the baby sounds like it has mucus you can suction it with a small bulb syringe.

Urination

The baby should pee within the first 12 hours. It should have as many wet diapers as it is days old (4 diapers on day 4). After day 4 the baby should have about 6 wet diapers a day.

Bowel Movements

The baby should have its first bowel movement within 24 hours.

The first bowel movements are called meconium. It will be very dark and tar like. As your milk comes in, the poop will change to yellow and seedy looking. If you breastfeed it should not have a foul odor. It is helpful to rub a little olive oil on the baby's bottom until the poop changes, it helps the meconium wipe right off.

Spitting up

It is normal for a baby to spit up. If your baby seems to be vomiting with every meal contact your pediatrician.

Things you should do for baby:

Going out

It is best to stay home for the first few weeks. You will be adjusting to each other and learning to breastfeed in this time. After you start going out, make sure anyone who holds your baby is not sick and has washed their hands. Do not pass the baby around to a lot of people, this will make him fussy. I recommend trying to keep the baby out of the church nursery or daycare.

Getting to Know Your Newborn

for as long as possible, especially during RSV season. What looks like a common cold in a older child or adult can be RSV in a newborn.

Breastfeeding

Nurse your baby at least every 2 hours until you milk comes in. After that, let your baby set its own pattern. Every baby had different needs, and they can change depending on its growth, or other environmental factors. Babies do not have enough fat reserves to sleep through the night until they are about 13 pounds. Once the baby sleeps 6 hours or more you can ovulate. Some babies have sensitive tummies, and you may need to avoid certain foods. The most common foods that upset babies are chocolate, caffeine, spicy foods, gassy foods, dairy products, and vegetables likes onions, garlic, tomatoes, broccoli, etc.

Burping

The baby will not usually need to be burped until the milk comes in. Some babies do not need to burp. Some babies spit up or get upset tummies if they do not burp. You should not need to wake your baby up to burp.

Bathing

Use just water or a very mild soap. Make sure to test the temperature of the water and do not make it too hot. Do not leave your baby unattended in a bath. Do not use Q tips in your babies ears.

For Diaper rash, wash the diaper region at each changing with diluted vinegar (1 to 2 tbsp per 1 liter water). The idea is to neutralize the ammonia from the baby's waste (8). Let baby go naked after you change him to help area dry out. Don't use commercial wipes. Sometimes Diaper rash is caused by a food allergy. As a breastfeeding mother or for a baby that is starting solids make sure you haven't added anything new to the diet. For a persistent rash cut out the common allergens Excess of vitamin C, pineapples or oranges (8)

Diaper Wipes

Avoid: Alcohol, Fragrances, Sodium Hydroxymethylglycinate

A lot of wipes contain alcohol which dries babies skin causing diaper rash (8) Many also contain fragrance. If you use commercial wipes make sure to buy fragrance free and alcohol free.

Many mothers use Cloth wipes or homemade wipes:

1 roll of paper towels

2 T. baby oil

2 T. baby bath or shampoo

2 cups boiled water, then cooled

Getting to Know Your Newborn

Old diaper wipe container

(or any airtight container will do)

Each roll of paper towels will make two boxes of wipes. Cut the roll of paper towels in half; leaving them in a roll. After you place your towels into the empty box, mix the remaining ingredients in a large measuring cup. Slowly pour the liquid over the towels, making sure to cover them evenly. Be sure to remove the cardboard from the middle before adding the liquid. After the towels have set for a short while, they will absorb the liquid more evenly and will keep fresh for several weeks.

Diapers

Avoid: SODIUM POLYACRYLATE: linked to Toxic Shock Syndrome. You can find the little "gel balls" of this on the skin of your baby's bottom. Employees in factories manufacturing sodium polyacrylate suffer from female organ problems, slow healing wounds, fatigue and weight loss. (6)

TBT (TRIBUTYL TIN): Damages our immune system and the hormonal system. There is some studies that find could cause boys to become sterile. (6)

DIOXIN: causes liver disease, immune system suppression and genetic damage. It is a formed by bleaching with chlorine gas and is banned in most countries, just not the US. (6)

In the United States 18 Billion diapers are thrown away yearly. (4) Disposable diapers represent 30% of non-biodegradable waste (5) These diapers take 200-600 years to biodegrade, taking up space and potentially harming the environment and water supply with hazardous waste. (5)

Disposable diapers contain toxic chemicals which have been linked to cancer, birth defects, liver damage, skin diseases, and genetic disorders. Some diapers also have absorbent crystals made with SODIUM POLYACRYLATE, the same chemical removed from tampons because they were linked with toxic shock syndrome in women. (4, 6) Diaper makers are not required to list their ingredients on the package. (5)

Some of the side effects thought to be from disposable diapers are increased UTI Infections in baby girls. Male Infertility as it is thought disposable diapers heat up boys testicles to a degree that which stops them from developing normal. In 1998 a study showed that childhood respiratory problems, including asthma, might be linked to inhaling the mixture of chemicals emitted from disposable diapers. Diaper Rash because disposable diapers mask wetness, become much hotter which allows more rapid bacterial growth, also the chemicals in Diapers cause rash in sensitive babies.

Many mothers are now going back to the old ways of using cloth diapers on their babies. Cloth Diapers are more convenient to use than they used to be. A lot of them come pre-folded, and

Getting to Know Your Newborn

they don't require the use of pins. Babies with frequent diaper rashes may benefit from using cloth diapers, as they don't contain chemicals.

Teething

Avoid: Tylenol or Motrin

Try a Frozen washcloth, Freeze Bananas, Organic Teething Biscuits, Natural teething tablets that contain Chamomilla or Belladonna, mix a few drops of Clove oil with an edible oil and rub into baby's gums. Rub vanilla on your babies gums to soothe and calm. (3)

1. Time to Protect Babies From Dangerous Products, CHICAGO, Feb. 28 (AScribe Newswire)
2. "<http://www.merrybaby.com/safebaby.cfm>" □
3. <http://www.earth-hugger.com/natural-teething-remedies.html>
4. □ http://www.earth-hugger.com/advantages_of_cloth_diapering.html"
5. <http://www.diapersandwipers.com/info.htm>
6. <http://www.diapersafari.com/diaperinfo/whyclothdiapers/>
7. "<http://www.allgoodarticles.com/article3868.html>" □□
8. <http://www.oohoi.com/natural%20remedy/home%20remedy/Home-Remedy-for-Diaper-Rash.htm>