



BRINGING HOME BABY

NEWBORN CARE

Bathing Baby

Give sponge baths until the umbilical cord of the belly button dries and falls off. After that tub baths can be started. Use mild soap and water, and work in a warm, draft-free area. Keep one hand on baby at all times and never leave unattended, even for a few seconds to answer the phone. Avoid using lotions, oils or cream on your baby's skin. If your baby's skin is very dry, you may apply a small amount of lotion or cream such as CeraVe, Eucerin or Vanicream

Laundry

Use a mild detergent for baby's clothing and blankets. Do not use a fabric softener, as it is irritating to baby's skin.

Bulb Syringe/Aspirator

Use this to remove mucus from baby's nose or mouth. Squeeze air out before inserting tip in nostril, then release. Hold one nostril closed while suctioning the other. Squeeze contents out onto tissue or cloth. Rinse well between uses. Replace if baby has frequent colds and you are using often.

Diaper Rash

Usually caused by irritants in baby's stool or urine, improperly laundered diapers or baby wipes. Prevent by keeping bottom clean and dry. You may use petroleum jelly to keep moisture away. Leaving diaper off allows air to heal irritated skin. Try diaper rash creams. If you don't notice an improvement, call baby's doctor. Change baby's diapers for urine or stool as soon as they are dirty. Change at each feeding time if needed. On girls, clean genitalia by wiping from front to back. For boys, remember to clean under the scrotum.

Cord Care

You may occasionally clean around the area with soap and water but must also keep it dry. Otherwise there is no need to touch the cord. It usually takes one to three weeks to fall off. Call baby's doctor if there is redness of the skin surrounding the umbilical cord. Fold diaper below the cord to help keep the cord dry. You can continue to apply rubbing alcohol until it is well healed. Notify your doctor if there is redness, smelly, thick yellow or green discharge, or a lot of bleeding from the navel area.

Nail Care: Fingers and Toes

Baby's fingernails may be long at birth, and if left uncovered and uncut, will scratch baby's face. It is easiest to trim nails when baby is sleeping. Cut straight across and not too close to the skin. Baby nail cutters are available. Rounding edges with a soft nail file is useful.

Baby's toenails grow slower than fingernails and don't need to be kept as short. It may only be necessary to trim them twice a month.

Jaundice

Jaundice is a common and normal finding in newborns. More than half of newborns within the first week of life become jaundiced. Sometimes, baby is born with extra red blood cells. As the red blood cells break down, a yellow substance called bilirubin is released. At this age, the baby's liver is not able to work fast enough to get rid of the extra bilirubin. Jaundice happens when too much bilirubin builds up in the blood and is stored in the skin, muscles and other places in the body, causing the skin to take on a yellowish color. The baby's body gets rid of the extra bilirubin in the bowel movements. It slowly takes care of itself within a few days to a few weeks.

Changes you should look for in your baby include if your baby is not eating every 2 to 4 hours or doesn't want to eat; sleeps more than 4 or 5 hours at a time; seems less active than usual; or has an increase in the yellow color of skin and/or whites of the eyes.

Sleep Safety

To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), always put your baby to sleep on their back. The American Academy of Pediatrics also recommends that infants sleep in their parents' room, close to the parents' bed, but on a separate approved surface designed for infants, ideally for the first year, but for at least six months. Approved infant sleep surfaces include safety-certified cribs, bassinets and play yards with firm, tight-fitting mattresses and tight-fitting bottom sheet. Babies at this age should not sleep with blankets, stuffed toys, pillows or any other soft item. Use a sleep sack instead of a blanket. Bumper pads are not recommended. For more information on safe sleep, visit healthychildren.org.