Well Baby Visits: Newborn

Congratulations on your new baby! Having a child is a large responsibility and can be a lot of work. At times it can seem overwhelming. As you are recovering from delivery, make sure you have enough support at home. Remember, in order to take care of a baby you need to take care of yourself.

Growth and Development

- At this age, your baby will mostly be doing one of two things – eating or sleeping.
- Newborns can see only some shadows.
- Over the next month, your baby will spend an increasing amount of time awake, but may not have the day and night cycle figured out yet.

Nutrition

- Newborns will likely need to eat every 2 to 3 hours until they are about 2 months old.
- Breast milk provides the best nutrition, supports the best growth and development and helps improve the immune system.
- If you are breastfeeding, your baby will need liquid vitamins made just for babies. Your doctor can tell you what is available over-the-counter or write a prescription.
- Your baby should be given only breast milk or formula in the first 6 months of life.
- If you decide not to breastfeed, make sure the formula you use is iron-fortified. Follow the directions on the formula container EXACTLY to prepare the formula.
- DO NOT warm a bottle of formula in the microwave. You may run hot water over the bottle or place it in a pan of hot water. Test the temperature of several drops of warmed formula on the inside of your wrist to be sure it is not too hot for your baby.
Safety

Sleep-related deaths are one of the leading causes of death for babies. These deaths used to be called Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Now they are called Sudden Unexplained Infant Deaths (SUIDs).

- Babies should ALWAYS be placed on their backs to sleep (Picture 1). Do not put your baby to sleep on his side. Your baby will not choke if he spits up.

- Never use soft bedding, comforters, pillows, loose sheets, blankets, sheep skins, toys, or bumpers in the crib or sleep area. These could cause your baby to suffocate.

- It is safest for your baby to sleep in a crib or bassinet. Bed sharing (sleeping in your bed with your baby) increases your baby’s chance of dying of SUIDs because adult beds and bedding are soft and can cause the baby to suffocate.

- Room sharing (your baby sleeps in your room in a separate space, such as a bassinette, Pack ‘n Play® or other safe sleep place) is a way to help prevent SUIDS.

- You may breastfeed your baby in bed with you. Always remember to put him back in his own separate safe place to sleep when you are finished nursing.

- Crib spindles should be no more than 2-3/8 inches apart. This is about as wide as a 12 ounce drink can or the short side of a dollar bill.

- The space between the mattress and the crib should be less than 2 finger-widths.

NEVER leave your baby alone any place other than in a crib.

ALWAYS place your baby in a rear-facing car seat that is in the back seat.

NEVER hit or shake a baby. If you begin to feel overwhelmed, take a break by having someone you trust watch your baby for a little while.
Other Issues

- A fever in a baby younger than 1 month of age is very serious. If you think your baby has a fever, you should check the temperature rectally (in the baby’s bottom). If the temperature is higher than 100.4°, your child should be seen by a doctor in the Emergency Room.

- If anyone smokes, it should be outside the house and **never around the baby**. Avoid smoking in the car, even with the window down. Not smoking at all is best.

- If you are interested in quitting smoking, your child’s doctor can help guide you to a stop smoking program.

- Some mothers may feel depressed after delivery. This is fairly common. It does not mean you are a bad parent or something is wrong with you, but it should be discussed with your doctor to help you through this difficult time. You can also visit [http://poemonline.org/](http://poemonline.org/) for information and resources.

- If you are feeling stressed and feel you need to talk to someone, please do. One option is the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453).

About this Helping Hand

At each visit, your doctor will talk with you about different aspects of your baby’s development, growth and safety in order to ensure your baby grows up healthy. These handouts were developed to reinforce the things your doctor will talk with you about at each visit. If you have any questions or concerns about your baby, please ask. We’re here to help!

Other Helping Hands that may be useful:

*Bottle feeding: Formula Preparation*, HH-IV-7

*Breast-feeding Your Baby*, HH-IV-6

*Temperature: Oral, Rectal and Axillary*, HH-II-27

*Safe Sleep Practices for Babies*, HH-IV-69

*Child Passenger Safety*, HH-IV-14

*Second-hand Smoke*, HH-IV-68

*Stop Smoking Programs*, HH-37