

# Newborn Care

## INFORMATION FOR THE CARE OF YOUR NEWBORN

Congratulations on your newborn! With the joys of the new baby comes the feelings of fatigue and an overwhelming sense of responsibility. Our Allied physicians are here to help provide quality healthcare and nurturing for your child.

Enjoy this exciting time and remember that we are here to help, always!

**Feeding:** The most important responsibilities during the early months of life are to provide love and nourishment to your baby. All newborns lose weight during the first few days after birth. However, they should never lose more than 10% of their birth weight. Most formula-fed babies are back to birth weight by 10 days of age, and breastfed babies by 14 days of age. Then, infants gain approximately a half ounce to one ounce per day during the early months. If breast milk/formula is provided liberally, the normal newborn's hunger drive ensures appropriate weight gain. If you are worried about your baby's weight gain, bring your baby to your physician's office for a weight check. Feeding problems detected early are much easier to remedy than those of long standing.

**Breast:** It's a great idea to breastfeed. On average, babies who are breastfed have fewer infections and allergies during the first year of life. Breast milk doesn't cost anything, is ready anytime, and best of all, it is made especially for babies. A breastfeeding mother often wonders if her baby is getting enough calories since she can't see how many ounces the baby takes. Your baby is doing fine if he or she demands to nurse every 1 1/2 to 3 hours, appears satisfied after feedings, takes both breasts at each nursing, wets 6 or more diapers each day, and passes 3 or more soft stools per day.

If you have questions or worries, call. Please take advantage of the hospital nurses. Many hospitals have lactation consultants to help, or you can contact the Allied Breast Feeding Support Division at 1-866-621-2769.



**Formula:** If you choose to formula-feed, be sure to use only formula until your baby is 1 year old. Formulas are made especially for babies. There are many types of formulas and multiple manufacturers who make similar formulas. If you're electing to use a formula not usually available in the United States, we recommend discussing this decision with your pediatrician. We recommend starting with a milk-based formula. Should you think your baby is not tolerating the formula, call your physician. Your infant's caregiver can discuss the pros and cons of different types of formula. Initially, your baby may want to feed every 2-4 hours. Formula is available in three forms: Powder, Concentrated liquid, and Ready-to-serve liquid. Always closely follow the directions for preparation.

**Normal Activities:** Your newborn may display behaviors that may appear concerning. Hiccups, sneezing, snorting, shivering with urination, straining, grunting, crying with the passage of gas and bowel movements. These are all normal behaviors. Crossed eyes can be common for up to 3 months of age. Occasional spitting up, startling to loud noises and changes in position are common. Blood may be seen when the cord comes off and vaginal blood spotting may be seen in 1-2-week-old females. Most infants have a fussy period at least once daily.

**Bathing:** Sponge bathe with a soft washcloth until the navel is healed for two days (and for five days following circumcision). Then, tub bathe with any mild soap. The water and room temperature should be comfortable. A mild lotion may be used after the bath.

**Diaper Area:** After bowel movements and urination cleanse the diaper area. In girls, separate the labia and gently remove debris. In circumcised boys, place Vaseline or topical antibiotic ointment on gauze and onto the raw area of the circumcision for at least 5 days. This should be done with each diaper change.

**Cleaning the Umbilicus:** Keep the umbilical cord area clean. Cleaning the area with rubbing alcohol is not recommended on a regular basis. Air exposure and dryness help healing, so be sure to keep the diaper folded down below the cord area.

**Cradle Cap:** Cradle cap consists of oily, yellow scales on the scalp and begins in the first weeks of life. Without treatment, it can last for months; with treatment, it usually is cleared up in a few weeks. Rub oil on scalp before bed. Comb out with a fine comb, toothbrush, or soft nail brush in morning. Baby oil may be applied during the daytime until scaling is at a minimum. Should this not help, call your infants physician.

**Eye Discharge:** Bathe with saline applied on a cotton ball or clean cloth three times daily. If persists, call your physician.

**Seat:** Whenever riding in a car, the infant needs to be in an approved rear-facing car seat. Position the car seat preferably in the rear middle seat. Please find the AAP current recommendations on car seats for all ages on the Allied Facebook page  
**Visitors:** Keep visitors to a minimum. Do not allow anyone with a cold or other infections near the infant. Never kiss an infant on the mouth.

### What is Circumcision?

Circumcision is the cutting of the foreskin or ring of tissue that covers the head of the penis. If you decide to have your newborn son circumcised, it is usually done the day he goes home from the hospital.

Fewer children in the U.S. are being circumcised now than several years ago. In 1979, 90% of American males were circumcised, today the number is closer to 60%. Many infant boys are Circumcised for religious purposes. The need to circumcise boys is open to question. Just because a father was circumcised doesn't mean that the son needs to be circumcised. The risks and benefits are both too small to swing the vote either way. This is a parental decision, not a medical decision.

### First Weeks at Home with a Newborn

For most parents the first weeks at home with a new baby are often the hardest in their lives. You will probably feel overworked, even overwhelmed. Inadequate sleep will leave you fatigued. Caring for a baby can be a lonely and stressful responsibility. You may wonder if you will ever catch up on your rest or work. The solution is asking for help. No one should be expected to care for a young baby alone. As already emphasized, everyone needs extra help during the first few weeks alone with a new baby. Ideally, it would be wonderful if you could plan for help before your baby is born. Asking for help is not a sign of failing, help is there so you can better take care of your infant.

**The Postpartum Blues:** Many women experience postpartum blues on the third or fourth day after delivery. The symptoms include tearfulness, tiredness, sadness, and difficulty in thinking clearly. The main cause of this temporary reaction is probably the sudden decrease of maternal hormones. Since the symptoms commonly begin on the day the mother comes home from the hospital, the full impact of being totally responsible for a dependent newborn may also be a contributing factor. Your pediatrician will be asking how you are doing and may ask you to fill out a depression questionnaire.

**One-Two Week Medical Check-up:** This checkup is probably the most important medical visit for your baby during the first year of life. Your child's physician will be able to judge how well your baby is growing from his or her height, weight, and head circumference. This is also the time your family is under the most stress of adapting to a new baby. Try to develop a habit of jotting down questions about your child's health or behavior at home. Entering the questions/issues on your phone may be the easiest way to remember to bring your list of questions to your appointment. Our medical professionals welcome the opportunity to address any question, especially if they are not easily answered by reading or talking with other parents. If possible, both parents should go to these first visits. We prefer to get to know both parents during a checkup rather than during the crisis of an acute illness.

The following books to help with newborn and young children:

1. CARING FOR YOUR BABY AND YOUNG CHILD, by the American Academy of Pediatrics, Bantam Books, 1994
2. YOUR CHILD'S HEALTH, by Barton Schmitt, MD, Bantam Books, 1991
3. TOUCHPOINTS, by T. Berry Brazelton, MD, Addison-Wesley, 1992
4. SOLVE YOUR CHILD'S SLEEP PROBLEMS, by Richard Ferber, MD, Simon & Schuster, 1985

