

Heart-to-Heart Talk (for Young and New Parents)

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Hello, young parents. If you don't know how to do take care of the "bundle of joy" who is challenging you every day, listen to this "sweet little voice" that is trying to say so many things to you.

Dear Mommy,

Do you know that I depend on you totally for love, warmth, and all my needs so that I can grow up to be a loving and healthy person? I want to thank you now for all the love and care you give me in case I get busy at play or growing up and I forget to tell you. So here we are together, ready for a great start.

Mom, first of all, **learn to relax**. I am an individual, and I will develop my own pattern for feeding, sleeping, and elimination. Please don't compare me with others.

There is no "right way" or "wrong way" to be a parent. The important thing is that you, dad, and I work together at becoming a family.

Believe me, I do sense your love, and I respond to it. If you talk to me, I will listen to your voice. If you look at me closely, I will be able to recognize your face.

Please do listen to me. I cannot talk right now, so I might cry for almost everything I need, or sometimes just for attention. Please bear with me. I will respond to your love and care and will hush up and listen to you.

I might sleep quite a bit since it was sort of a struggle for both of us to get where we are now. That does not mean that you should leave me alone. If you gently stimulate me, I will wake up. And although I might need to be persuaded to feed, do not be discouraged or think there is something wrong with you.

I love to watch bright things that move, and I am most interested in objects or faces that are 12 inches away.

Please, Mom, bundle me with warm cloths and blankets only until I'm two weeks old. After that, I can maintain my skin temperature, so don't overdress me. Even when my hands and feet are cool, I am still perfectly comfortable. When you take me outside, dress me according to the weather conditions just as you would dress yourself.

I sneeze often to clear my nasal passages, but that doesn't mean I have cold. I do get hiccups frequently, especially after feeding, but these go away on their own. I don't need water for them.

Feeding

Now, about my first feeding. I may not be too interested until I recover from that tight squeeze I had and my system becomes stable. Once I get started, I may become more demanding, especially if you feed me **breast milk**. You see, since it tastes good and is easily digestible, it might not stay in my stomach too long, so I will get hungry sooner.

Please feed me at least **every four hours**, and even if I'm asleep, wake me up. Once I am a month old, it's okay to let me sleep if I sleep a little longer. If I am not getting enough milk, I will let you know. And it is okay to give me some formula until you get more milk. Still, I want to breast feed first.

Sometimes I swallow air with milk, and it will bother me. So please burp me after I eat.

Sometimes I'll spit up after feeding or in between feedings. This may go on for few months, but don't worry. If I do this a lot, put me in an infant seat after I eat. And don't forget to burp me.

I need to eat only milk until I am four months old. Then I am ready to eat baby food. In general, I don't need extra water until I am four months old and start to eat solid food, but it doesn't harm me if I drink plain water once in a while. Just don't spoil me by adding sugar to the water.

Yummy honey would be tasty, but I don't want any until I am one year old because of the deadly disease it can give me.

Bathing and Skin Care

I don't get dirty like big kids, so you don't need to give me a bath every day, but if you do give me one, I will love it. You can use **gentle soap**, but be careful. I have very sensitive skin. You can use unscented lotion after two weeks, but remember, my skin looks like it's peeling because I was in the mommy bathtub for nine months!

Please **don't use powder** at any time because I may inhale it, and it's not good for my lungs. Please always check under my neck and arms and in my inguinal (groin) area, and keep these places dry because I may develop a nasty rash there.

Please wash my diaper area with a wash cloth and water; it feels good. Sometimes you can use a baby wipe, but please be gentle. My skin might get broken, and then I'll get a rash. You can use some diaper rash cream or Vaseline to prevent rashes; start using it after two weeks.

Care of the Umbilical Cord

The remnant of my attachment to you will fall off in one to two weeks. Until then, keep it clean with alcohol. If you see any redness or there is a foul smell and discharge, please take me to the doctor. A small amount of bleeding may occur as the cord detaches itself from my naval. Don't panic; that's normal.

Elimination

The next thing I want you to know is that little ones like me may urinate up to seven or even ten times a day. Oh, please don't be shocked. I will do better as I grow older.

About the bowel movement: my first one will be thick, a greenish or black color, and sticky. If I drink formula, my stool will look like a thick, yellow-green paste or will be a seedy yellow. If you feed me your breast milk, then it will look like cottage cheese curds in a watery base.

I usually strain with a bowel movement, but it doesn't mean I have constipation. Of course, I also pass gas frequently; pardon me! I may have bowel movements five or six times a day, or I may have just one every three to four days. Both are be normal.

Safety

I hope you have a **car seat** ready for me.

Never leave me alone on a bed, sofa, or changing table.

I love sun, but I shouldn't get a lot of it now. Since I get burned easily, keep me under a shade if you want to enjoy the sun.

Never put my pacifier on a string or cord and hang it around my neck. I might strangle.

And, please, I don't want any jewelry now.

Please check the temperature of the water before giving me a bath. I am afraid of getting burned or scalded.

Please don't heat my milk in the microwave. It can burn my tongue.

Give me a safe crib and a **firm mattress**. I like to sleep on my back for safety reasons.

Mom, please **don't smoke** or don't let me be around anyone who smokes because it increases the risk of my getting asthma, ear infections, colds, and other things.

I love parties, but I'm not ready for them now. I want to stay away from crowds and sick people at least until I am two or three months old because I don't want to get sick.

Please wash your hands before taking care of me and after changing my diaper.

Signs of Illness

Please, Mom, check the following if you notice anything that looks wrong. Let my physician know if any of these things happen, because I need help.

1. If my **temperature is higher than 101**
2. If I have **difficulty feeding**, if I **spit up excessively**, or if my **tummy gets distended** and I seem to be in pain
3. If I am **breathing faster than 60 breaths a minute** when I'm not fussing or crying
4. If my **lips are blue** and I have difficulty feeding and breathing at the same time
5. If I look **more yellow** to you than I should (that is called jaundice)
6. If I am not responding to your voice or touch, if I look **lethargic**, or if there is any unusual behavior that you are concerned about

For any of these warning signs, don't hesitate to take me to my physician. He or she will be happy to help you and help me too.

Oh, Dad, I did not forget you. Since Mom is going to do the most of work at the beginning, I thought she ought to listen to most of the talk. However, I also want you to guide me in each and every step of my life. I love both of you.

Now, if you are all ready, let's go and add a little love to this world!

Love,
Your Baby