



Newborn Care

JOE & BABY BRIANNA

It's wonderful. I can see more responsibility is upon me now. She's a bundle of joy and she's everything that I hoped for.

LORETTA & BABY RICO

You do get nervous. Bathing them, feeding them and changing them 'cause they're so little you feel like you're going to break their little arm or something by changing them.

KIM & BABY JORDAN

It seems like you're either feeding or changing or just trying to get them back to sleep--you think you have a few minutes and then it's starting all over again. But it's wonderful.

PARENTS & BABIES

NARRATOR: During the first few weeks at home, you'll be busy feeding, changing diapers, holding, and loving your baby as you get to know each other.

Your Baby's First 2 Weeks at Home

PARENT

There's a lot of things that are new. I find for myself things just aren't as natural for me as they are for her. I'm questioning a lot; the feeding around the clock kind of surprised me. I thought it was a little less than that. The way they have to be held.

PARENT

I guess you just don't want to make a mistake, too, so it's good to know with the information you get from taking classes or you know seeing your doctor and calling the advice nurse; having a little backup

NARRATOR: Learning some techniques on how to care for your baby before he or she is born can help. Basic skills that you can use when you feed, clean, and soothe your baby may allow you to enjoy each other more as well as help you avoid some frustrating times.

Feeding your Newborn

NARRATOR: A good time to get to know each other is when you feed your baby

Breastfeeding

PARENT: I chose to breastfeed because it seems so natural. Its absolutely convenient. Don't have to take bottles with you, make sure you have enough formula.

NARRATOR: Another wonderful aspect of breastfeeding is the bonding. Breastfeeding is the preferred way to feed a baby because both mother and baby benefit.

Breastfeeding benefits babies because breast milk contains antibodies, or special ingredients, that can help protect a baby from infections, like ear infections and pneumonia, as well as allergies.

A baby who is breastfed is also less likely to develop diabetes, obesity and heart disease at anytime in life. Breastfeeding can also reduce the risk of SIDS or crib death. And breast milk is easier for a newborn to digest.

A mother also benefits from breastfeeding. Breastfeeding helps a new mother's body return to its pre pregnancy condition and helps protect her from getting osteoporosis, or weakening of the bones, later in life. A woman who breastfeeds longer than 6 months may have less chance of getting breast cancer before menopause.

After a baby is born, the mother begins to produce breast milk in glands called alveoli. Ducts carry the milk from the alveoli to milk pools located behind the areola--the darker part of the breast that surrounds the nipple.

While breastfeeding, a baby uses the gums to "pull" or suck the milk into the nipple. The amount of milk a baby takes in tells the mother's body whether to increase or decrease the amount of breast milk she produces.

While breastfeeding, it's important that both you and your baby are comfortable and relaxed. In the hospital, you can use pillows for support--try putting them behind your back, at your side, and on your lap. It also helps to raise the back of your bed to an upright position.

Turn your baby's body toward you--tummy to tummy or chest to chest. Support your baby's thigh or buttocks with your forearm and snuggled securely in your arms.

The Cradle Hold is one way to hold a baby while nursing: hold your baby with the arm that is on the same side as the breast from which your baby is going to nurse. For example, if you are going to nurse with your left breast, hold your baby with your left arm so the baby's head rests in the crook of your arm.

The Cross-Cradle Hold is similar to the Cradle Hold except you hold the baby with the arm on the side opposite to the one you are breastfeeding on. Support the baby's head at the base of the neck with your hand. It's important not to touch the back of the head--this can cause your baby to pull away from your breast.

The Clutch or Football hold is another way to nurse. Using pillows to support your arm hold your baby close to your side with the feet towards your back and face next to your breast. This position is often easier for a mother who has had a Cesarean or who has large breasts.

Once you feel comfortable with the basic skills of breastfeeding, you can try nursing while lying down.

While cradling your baby with one arm, cup your breast with the hand of the other arm by placing your thumb above the areola and your fingers below and under the breast.

With your baby's nose at the same level as your nipple, lightly brush your nipple against your baby's lower lip and wait for the mouth to open in a yawn--this is called a "rooting reflex."

Quickly bring your baby towards your breast and center your nipple and areola in the mouth. Then, not just your nipple, but as much of your areola as possible will be in baby's mouth.

Make sure your baby's chin is against your breast and that the nose is free to breathe. Cupping and lifting up your breast slightly will help.

As long as a baby is hungry and as long as there is breast milk, he or she will continue to suck, pause, and swallow about once every second.

PARENT: I didn't think every hour on the hour he would be eating, but one of the pediatricians said that if they do it and they want it and you're breastfeeding, you should go ahead and feed them on demand.

NARRATOR: During the first two weeks, you'll need to nurse every 1 1/2 to 3 hours, or 8 to 12 times every day. You may sometimes need to wake your baby up to eat.

While nursing, it's important to take the time to burp your baby--this can help prevent gas pains.

When finished, try propping your baby up for 15 minutes.

If you use an infant seat or a car seat for this, remember to keep baby safe by always buckling up.

At times you may want to stop nursing while your baby is still attached to your breast. You can break the suction by putting your finger in the corner of the mouth between the upper and lower gums.

If you have questions or concerns about breastfeeding your newborn, call your Kaiser Medical Center. Lactation consultants are available at most Kaiser Facilities.

Bottle Feeding

If you decide to bottle feed, your baby's health care provider can recommend an infant formula.

Most formulas are either cow's milk based or soy based and are available as ready-to-feed liquid, concentrated liquid, or in powdered form

Be sure to check the expiration date before you buy formula.

Before preparing the formula, be sure to read the preparation and storage instructions on the container. If mixed incorrectly, a baby can get very sick.

Rinse bottles and nipples after every use, and then wash them in hot soapy water. Using a bottle brush can help loosen milk that sticks.

Feeding times vary from one baby to another. Try feeding your baby about 2 to 3 ounces of formula every 3 to 4 hours.

Sometimes you may store a bottle of formula in the refrigerator. If so, take the chill off by putting it under hot running water for a few minutes. Be sure to check the milk's temperature by squeezing a small amount on your wrist.

It's important not to heat a bottle on the stove or in a microwave--these can heat unevenly or overheat and then burn a baby's mouth.

Cleaning your New Baby

Since most babies don't get dirty until they begin to crawl, it's usually enough to bathe a baby every two or three days and clean the genital area when you change diapers.

Bathing your Baby

GEORGE: After the first time, when it's not, you know if she's not fussy, it's fun to just see all the little parts of her body, cause she's so little right now. A little nerve-wracking, trying to stay away from the umbilical cord.

NARRATOR: Bath time is a good time for you and your baby to get to know each other. It's also a good time for your partner or other helpers to take part in caring for the new baby. Sponge baths are recommended until after your baby's umbilical cord stump falls off.

A baby is not put in water during a sponge bath. Instead, fill a container with warm water and keep it within easy reach. Clean your baby using either a damp wash cloth or a cotton ball.

When your baby is a little older, you can use a sink or portable tub with just a few inches of water in it

If you use a sink, be sure to scrub it clean before each bath and use a towel or foam liner to pad the sink's hard surface. Before you start the bath, it's important to make sure that the water is warm, but not too hot. You can test it by touching a few drops to your wrist.

To help keep the water from being too hot, adjust the temperature of your water heater to warm. It's important to never leave your baby alone--even for a second. Gather towels, washcloths, cotton balls, mild soap, clean baby clothes and any other items before you start.

During the bath, a baby can be very slippery, especially when wet. A good way to support your baby is to wrap your arm around his or her body. It may also help to swaddle or wrap baby in a receiving blanket or put a T-shirt on for the first few baths.

Whether you bathe your newborn using a sponge bath or in the sink, it's best to begin by cleaning your baby's eyes and face with clear water and finish by cleaning the diaper area. Use clear water and a corner of the wash cloth or a cotton ball when washing the eyes. Clean from the nose side of each eye to the outer corner--this follows the natural direction of the flow of tears across the eye. Be sure to use a different cotton ball or section of the wash cloth for each eye. Next, wash the rest of the face: the forehead, cheeks, and chin. Also clean the neck and under the chin where spit-up can collect.

When you wash the ears, keep in mind the saying "never put anything smaller than your elbow in your ear."

Twist a corner of a washcloth or a cotton ball and clean only the outer area of each ear. Since the ear canal is very sensitive, it's important not to clean any further into the ear. Do not use Q-tips.

You can use a little mild soap when washing your baby's head. Don't be afraid to clean the soft spots--scrubbing won't damage them. Soft spots are normal and will close as the baby grows.

Babies sometimes get Cradle Cap--an oily, yellow scale or crust that forms on their scalps. Cradle Cap is caused by a normal buildup of oils on the skin.

You can help prevent Cradle Cap by scrubbing the scalp gently with a soft baby brush. Rinse well and dry your baby's head. To help keep a baby warm during the rest of the bath, put a little hat on your newborn's head.

As you wash under the arms and between the fingers, you may find a white creamy substance in the folds of the skin. This coating, called Vernix protected the skin before birth. If there is a lot of vernix, try washing it off a little at a time to avoid irritating your baby's skin

Next, wash the chest. Turn your baby over and wash and dry the back. Putting a shirt on can help keep your baby warm during the rest of the bath.

Wash the legs, feet and toes next. After washing and drying them, remove the diaper and wash the genital area.

If your new baby is a girl, always wash her genitals from front to back. This helps prevent bladder infections by keeping germs found near the rectum away from the bladder area.

Be sure not to use baby lotion and powder--they are not necessary and can irritate a baby's skin and lungs.

Changing Diapers

GEORGE: Had a few problems with diaper rash. She was pooping a lot, so she had a really red bottom. And we've had to change her diapers over and over again.

NARRATOR: You can expect to change about 7 to 10 diapers a day and approximately 8,000 diapers within the first 2 or 3 years.

When you change your baby's diaper, never leave him or her alone on the changing table. Make sure everything is within arm's reach.

It's important to clean your baby each time you change a diaper. Use a warm, wet cloth to wash off urine and stool. Be sure to clean all the folds of the skin.

For baby girls, separate the labia, or lips of the vagina, and wipe from front to back with a clean part of the washcloth.

For baby boys, clean under the scrotum, or sack, and between the scrotum and penis.

One decision you'll need to make is whether to use cloth or disposable diapers. Hygiene, cost, comfort and convenience are all part of this decision.

Cloth diapers are folded differently for baby boys than for baby girls. Boys need more diaper material in the front and girls need more material in the back

Place the clean diaper under the buttocks and fold down the diaper's front edge. Be sure to keep the diaper below the umbilical cord until the umbilical cord falls off.

When pinning the diaper, place your hand between the diaper and the baby's skin. Or you can use waterproof diaper covers with Velcro--these don't require pins.

If you use disposable diapers, place the diaper under your baby's buttocks with the sticky part of the tape facing up. Pull the lower part of the diaper up through the baby's legs and bring the tape

around the baby's stomach. Attach the tape to the front part of the diaper. Make sure you fold and fasten the diaper below the umbilical cord stump.

Umbilical Cord Care

Within the first two hours after birth, the umbilical cord begins to dry. By the second or third day it shrivels and blackens and, then, falls off one to two weeks later.

A good time to care for the umbilical cord is when you change your baby's diaper. To help it dry, apply alcohol to the cord stump. Wet a cotton ball or cotton swab with rubbing alcohol and gently dab it on the cord area. Your baby may cry--not because it hurts but because it's cold.

A small amount of bleeding is normal. If bleeding continues or if you notice that the area around the base of the cord is red and smells, call your baby's pediatrician.

Caring for the Uncircumcised & Circumcised Penis

A baby boy is born with a foreskin, a ring of skin that covers the head of the penis. If you decide to have your son circumcised, the foreskin is removed from the penis. Afterwards, the head of the penis is always exposed.

Caring for your son's uncircumcised penis is easy--there's nothing extra to do. You can clean the area when you change his diaper.

To care for your son's circumcised penis, gently rinse the area with water 3 times a day or when you change his diaper.

After some circumcisions, a plastic ring is left tied to the baby's penis. It's important not to pull this ring off--it can cause bleeding. Four to 10 days after the circumcision, the ring should fall off.

Checking your Baby's Temperature

When your baby is sick, you'll need to check his or her temperature. Do not use a mercury thermometer. If a glass thermometer breaks, a newborn may be exposed to mercury, a hazardous material. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends using digital thermometers in homes with children.

Although you can take your baby's underarm temperature or rectal temperature, the rectal temperature is preferred because it is more accurate.

To check the rectal temperature while sitting, place your baby across your lap with the buttocks up. Or check it while your baby is lying on his or her back.

Be sure to keep waterproof pads and spare diapers handy in case your baby has a bowel movement or urinates.

After applying a little Vaseline to the bulb end of the thermometer, separate your baby's buttocks and gently push the thermometer 1/4 to 1/2 inch into the rectum.

It's important not to insert the thermometer too far. While holding the thermometer with one hand, use your other hand to hold your baby.

Wait two minutes or until the thermometer beeps. Then, remove the thermometer. If the rectal temperature is above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, call for Advice immediately.

Make sure to wipe the thermometer with a tissue, wash it in cold soapy water, and then wipe with alcohol before putting it away.

To take an underarm temperature, make sure the area under your baby's arm is dry. Place the bulb end of the thermometer under your baby's arm and hold the arm snugly against the body. Wait four to five minutes or until the thermometer beeps. Remove the thermometer and check the temperature. If the underarm temperature is above 99.4 degrees Fahrenheit, call for advice immediately.

Soothing a Fussy Baby

The amount of time babies cry varies. It's normal for babies to cry up to two to three hours a day. Some babies cry a lot more and some babies cry less.

GEORGE: It's hard to remember, when you're so sleep deprived, but I've always tried the gamut--probably see if she's hungry first.

GINAMARIE: A lot of times they just want to suck a little; they just want to smell mom and be close to mom. They're used to being inside of you and hearing all your rhythms.

NARRATOR: A baby doesn't cry to upset us or make us miserable; he or she is trying to communicate needs and feelings. When we respond and meet a baby's needs, we teach a baby to trust us.

GINAMARIE: When she first starts to fuss, the first thing I usually do is try to see if she wants to eat.

NARRATOR: Babies can become hungry more often during a growth spurt. Try feeding your baby even if he or she just ate an hour ago.

JEFF: When she's fussing, I usually check to see if she's got a clean diaper. It's amazing, that a real--sometimes a big thing and it's different with each baby.

NARRATOR: Babies also cry if they are about to have a stool or if they've just had one.

GINAMARIE: I'll change her diaper; make sure nothing's poking her. Sometimes with the new diapers, or the plastic ones, the little tabs can be kind of sharp at the top, so I make sure that that's not poking her.

ENZINGA: He fusses with gas. He just starts to kind of cry and look a little irritable, so I'll like change positions with him. This one really works a lot--just putting his knees up to his stomach and the feet onto my chest and kind of bending them up, and after that, I oftentimes get gas to come out.

NARRATOR: To help prevent gas pains: make sure your baby isn't swallowing too much air while feeding; feed your baby slowly while holding him or her almost upright; and take the time to burp your baby. After feeding, try propping your baby up for 15 minutes.

Babies also cry when they're cold or when they're too warm.

DENISE: I see if he's hot, and if he's cold, because sometimes he might be too hot or too cold and I'll get a blanket to comfort him when he's cold and take off clothes when he's hot.

NARRATOR: You can check by touching your baby's neck and hands. The neck should feel warm but not sweaty and the hands should feel slightly cool.

If the skin feels warm, remove some clothing. If, after 10 minutes, the skin still feels hot, take your baby's temperature.

Crying can also mean a baby is tired.

A baby may not know that he or she needs to sleep and cries instead. You can help by swaddling and rocking your newborn to sleep.

DARRYL: It seems a lot of times he just likes to know we're still there. Sometimes just walking over to him and letting him look at you and look back and talk to him and he's fine.

NARRATOR: Since babies sometimes cry because they're lonely, you might try picking up and cuddling your baby.

LISA: She really likes being against either myself or Joe cause she likes to hear our heartbeat and our breathing. And it's very consoling to her and sometimes when I put her in the bassinet and if she's not all the way a sleep, you know, she'll cry and as soon as I pick her up and put her on my chest, she's okay.

NARRATOR: Babies also get tense and need to let off steam. Continuous motion and sounds can help calm a baby. You might try rocking your baby yourself or in a baby swing, or take him or her for a ride in the car or stroller. Try putting your baby near sounds like running water, soft music or a dull, constant noise. Singing to your baby can also help.

DENISE: I find music to be real comforting and soothing to Ryan. I also sing to him. And I go in his bedroom and I use the rocking chair. And he likes that a lot.

NARRATOR: Babies sometimes become over stimulated and need to let off extra energy. It might help to take your baby to a quieter place to be alone.

Sometimes you may try everything you can think of and your baby still cries. At times like this, it's OK to lay a baby down. After a short while, a baby usually becomes exhausted and goes to sleep.

If you're not comfortable letting your baby cry and if the crying doesn't bother you, continue holding your baby.

Caring for a Colicky Baby

MELISSA: She was eating and she was gaining weight, so it's not like there's anything wrong with her. She just cried a lot. So I had to find ways to deal with it.

NARRATOR: When a baby cries an extreme amount, he or she may have colic. These crying spells may last more than 3 hours per day and usually occur in the late afternoon or early evening. Nothing a parent does will soothe or calm a baby with colic.

Doctors aren't sure what causes colic. It often starts during a baby's second or third week of life, is at its worst at 6 weeks old, and then starts to decrease. By 3 months old, it's usually gone. Since there's no known cause, it's hard to know what will help.

MELISSA: I try to stay as calm as possible. And if she's been crying for you know say a period of a half hour straight, and there's nothing I can do to calm her and I start feeling like I'm getting upset or I'm starting to get frustrated, then I'll put her in her crib for a few minutes and -just let her have her little fit and walk away. I calm myself down, and then I go back in, I pick her up, and nine times out of ten it'll calm her right down.

NARRATOR: It's important to stay calm--a baby can sense if crying upsets you and then become even more upset. Relaxation techniques such as deep breathing might help. If you try to soothe your baby and it doesn't help, let your partner or another family member hold your baby.

GINAMARIE: Sometimes mom gets too stressed, just with the baby being stressed, and I feel like they pick up on that. And so I'll hand her off to dad, and he'll put her in a pack and head out the front door and go for a walk.

JEFF: As soon as I walked out that door, they'd look around or they'd just quiet down instantly. It was really kind of a nice sedative.

NARRATOR: Ask a baby-sitter, trusted friend or relative to take care of your baby. Be sure the person has cared for your baby before and can remain calm during your baby's crying.

JEFF: The grandparents of course always have a vested interest in their care. And so they're really always our first choice. We have a lot of friends that have young kids and we've seen how they act and how their kids are and generally agree with their parenting styles.

NARRATOR: Something else you can try is giving your baby a bath during the "colic" hours. Establishing regular routines, such as feeding time or sleep time, might also help.

It's important to never yell at, shake or hit your baby--hitting and shaking can cause permanent brain damage. If you think you or someone else, might hurt your baby call your medical center, or look in your yellow pages for a family support hot line phone number.

If your baby looks healthy and acts normal between episodes of colic, you don't need to worry.

It is important to call your medical center if your baby is vomiting, has diarrhea or other signs that concern you; if colic lasts more than four hours a day; or if you feel like you're losing self-control.

GINAMARIE: Almost every day is a new surprise, you know. When they first come out, their shapes of their faces aren't totally formed the way they're going to be, and so you get to see how their noses turn out and what color hair.

NARRATOR: Becoming a new parent is a wonderful and challenging experience, filled with many rewards.

Using the techniques discussed in this videotape can help as you feed, bathe, and calm your new baby.

For more information, be sure to check your Health wise Handbook or visit your local health education center. And remember to call your baby's pediatrician if you have any questions.

RAYMOND: It's great to have him here. He's healthy is the main thing. And he's growing everyday and it's the addition of the family. It's really great to have him home finally.

DARRYL: I feel really wanted and needed. It's, it's a type of responsibility that once it's upon you, you really relish it.

LISA: My mom always told me that, "You'll never realize how much you can love something until you have a child of your own." And even when she was in my womb I just had this great love for her. Now that's she's here and I can see her, feel her, touch her, smell her--it's just so unique and it's so deep.