

Newborn Discharge Teaching



The Birthing Center
(802) 888-8304

The Women's Center
(802) 888-8100

Feeding Your Baby

- **Breastfeeding/Chestfeeding**

If you are breastfeeding/ chestfeeding your baby, you are giving your baby a great start. Your milk is tailored specifically to your baby at every age and for every environment. It changes as they grow to suit their nutritional needs, and provides antibodies specific to the germs to which you and your baby are exposed! Here are some things to keep in mind:

- It is important to be patient with yourself and your baby as you begin this journey. Remember that your baby is programmed to nurse and that your body is programmed to make milk, but that breastfeeding/ chestfeeding is a learned skill. We are meant to spend this time in the red tent, surrounded by many experienced hands. It is crucial that you reach out for help when you need it. We have a lactation consultant available at the Women's Center, and she is happy to support you over the phone or in person: (802)888-8100
- Newborn babies need be fed at least 8 times in 24 hours. Offer feeding
- opportunities at least every 2-3 hours by putting your baby skin to skin on your chest. This also encourages bonding!
- A baby should have at least 5 wet diapers and at least 5 poopy diapers a day starting around day 5, after your milk has come in. If you think your baby isn't having enough dirty diapers, or if they are inconsolable, there is a chance they are not getting enough milk, and you should

contact their provider and a lactation consultant.

- **Bottle Feeding**

If you are bottle-feeding your baby, it is important to carefully read and follow the instructions on the formula container.

- If mixing powdered formula, be sure your water is from a safe source. If using tap water, you can contact your local health department. Always measure the water before adding the powdered formula.
- Babies do not need their milk to be heated, but some parents choose to do this. Never use a microwave to heat milk as it can create uneven hot spots that burn your baby's mouth and throat.
- Formula that has been opened or mixed with water is good at room temperature for two hours, or in the fridge for 24 hours. Do not save an unfinished bottle for later, as saliva mixed with formula can cause bacterial growth.
- Clean and sanitize bottles between use.
- It is possible to overfeed your bottle-fed baby. A good way to figure out how many ounces of formula your baby needs in 24 hours is to multiply their weight in pounds by 2.5. For example, if your baby weighs 8 pounds: $8 \times 2.5 = 20$, so your baby needs 20 ounces of formula over a 24 hour period.

Umbilical Cord Care

- Keep umbilical cord dry.
- The cord will turn from yellow to brown to black and should fall off in one to three weeks.
- If the area around the cord becomes red, or if you notice any discharge, call your baby's provider.

Bathing and Skin Care

- It is not necessary to bathe a newborn baby. Babies are born covered in a protective substance called vernix which contains beneficial anti-bacterial enzymes. Delaying bathing also helps your baby's skin to establish a healthy microbiome.
- When you are ready to give your baby a bath, you may do a sponge bath or bathe them in a small tub. If you use a tub, keep in mind that it may take longer for the umbilical cord to dry up and fall off. Be sure your baby is well supported while in the water! If doing a sponge bath, keep areas that are not actively being washed dry and warm. Babies lose heat quickly.
- Some areas of your baby's body require more frequent cleaning. Once a day, take a warm, damp washcloth to your baby's neck and hands. Milk can dribble down and become trapped in the neck creases, and this can create irritation. Keep your baby's bottom clean and dry as well.
- For a tub bath, make sure water is warm (not hot). Use only water or mild, fragrance-free soaps; babies have very sensitive skin! **NEVER LEAVE YOUR BABY UNATTENDED IN THE TUB, EVEN FOR A MOMENT!**
- Limit lotions or other skin-care products. Pure coconut oil is a good option, as it is 100% natural, a great moisturizer, and has anti-bacterial properties.

Comforting a Fussy Baby

- Babies cry to tell us they need something. If your baby is fussy, make sure they are fed, warm, dry and burped. Sometimes they need a change of environment, and just walking outside can help!
- Responding promptly to your baby's cries helps them feel secure. You cannot spoil a baby by comforting them.
- Sometimes, starting around 3 weeks and lasting until 10-12 weeks, babies may cry for no obvious reason. Often referred to as the "witching hour", it frequently occurs in the evening. It may be due to overstimulation, or gas pain, or something else entirely. It remains a bit of a mystery.
- Run through the 5 S's of comforting a fussy baby.
- **Swaddling** makes baby feel snug and calm.
- **Side- or Stomach Position** is NOT safe for sleeping but can help soothe your babe while awake.
- **Shushing**/white noise may replicate the sounds baby heard in the womb and has a calming effect.
- **Swinging** may also replicate womb life. Be sure to support your baby's head and neck and bob quickly up and down with your babe in your arms.
- **Sucking** on a pacifier or on a parent's clean finger can also help your baby to calm down or fall asleep.
- If you have tried everything and your baby is still fussy, it is ok to put them down in a safe place and walk away for a few minutes. Take some deep breaths and remind yourself that this will not last! Your baby is doing their best and so are you.
- **Never shake your baby. Shaken baby syndrome can cause brain damage and death.**

Shaken Baby Syndrome

- Shaken baby syndrome is a form of whiplash that causes head trauma and, in 25% of cases, results in death.
- It most often occurs when a baby will not stop crying and the caregiver is exhausted and frustrated. Because babies cannot support their heads, forcefully shaking a baby causes brain swelling and brain cell death.
- Symptoms may include
 - Irritability/extreme fussiness
 - Feeding problems
 - Vomiting
 - Breathing problems
 - Lethargy
 - Pale/bluish skin
 - Paralysis/coma
 - Seizures
- Long term damage may include blindness, developmental delays, seizure disorders, and cerebral palsy.
- **If you believe your baby may have been injured from shaking, seek medical assistance immediately.**

Newborn Developmental Needs/ Technology

- Your baby's brain is developing rapidly. Positive interactions promote healthy brain growth; gentle touch is so important!
- Talk and sing to your baby! Their brain is absorbing all the sounds they hear, and this is laying the foundation for speech.
- Babies express their needs and their feelings through sound and facial expressions. It is important to respond promptly to your baby when they are telling you they need something! This will help them feel secure and loved.
- Babies cannot manipulate you; if they are crying, it is because they truly need your help.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under age two avoid digital media altogether. In order to promote healthy brain development, it is important for your baby to have face to face interactions- it is you who will make your baby smarter, not Baby Einstein.
- **YOU CANNOT SPOIL A BABY WITH TOO MUCH LOVE!** The more snuggles, the better.

Safe Sleep/SIDS Risk Prevention

- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the unexplained death of a seemingly healthy baby, often during sleep. While we may not understand the reason for a SIDS occurrence, there are factors that we do know to increase SIDS risk as well as ways to help protect your baby from SIDS.
- Practicing Safe Sleep is the number one way you can help prevent SIDS. Remember the **ABCs** of safe sleep:
 - **ALONE:** Babies should sleep in their own crib or bassinet, not in bed with you. There should be no pillows, crib bumpers, soft bedding or toys in the crib.
 - **BACK:** A baby up to one year old should be placed to sleep on their back- not their belly nor their side.
 - **CRIB:** Babies should sleep in a crib with a firm mattress and a tight fitting bottom sheet. Never let your baby sleep on sofas or arm chairs.
- Other factors that help reduce SIDS risk are breastfeeding, room sharing (but not bed sharing), and pacifier use during sleep (once breastfeeding has been established).
- Factors that increase SIDS risk are maternal drug and alcohol use, secondhand smoke exposure, and overheating (babies only need one layer more than an adult- and it is not recommended to put hats on babies for sleep).

Taking a Temperature

- Normal newborn temperature ranges from 97.5-99.5 F, or 36.5-37.5 C.
- Under the armpit is the best place to take a baby's temperature. Do not take a rectal temperature, due to risk for injury.
- Be sure to call your baby's provider if they have a temperature of 100.4 or above.

Your Newborn's Appearance

- Babies have soft spots called fontanelles on the top and back of their skull. The fontanelles will become smaller and gradually disappear as the skull bones fuse. The top fontanelle should close around 3 months and the back fontanelle between 18 and 36 months. It is fine to gently touch and wash around these areas.
- Contact your baby's provider if you notice that the fontanelles look sunken or bulging. Sunken fontanelles may indicate dehydration; bulging may indicate fluid build-up, which is a medical emergency.
- It is normal to see your baby's pulse in their fontanelle.
- Babies are born covered in a waxy substance called vernix. As the vernix is absorbed, your baby's skin may start to peel. This does not mean your baby's skin is dry and you do not need to use lotion.
- You may notice a red rash called erythema toxicum, or newborn rash. This is normal; it might appear within 3 days of birth and usually resolves in 1-2 weeks.
- It is also normal for babies to have small white or yellow bumps, called milia, on their face. These are caused by blocked pores, so creams and ointments may make them worse. By 1-2 months your baby's pores will open up and the milia should resolve.
- Newborn acne may appear when babies are 3-5 weeks old; this may look like a red, oily rash. Just continue to wash your baby's face with water; oils, creams and ointments will make the rash worse. This should also resolve as skin pores open, around 1-2 months.
- You may also notice a waxy, scaly substance on your baby's head. This is cradle cap, a build-up of your baby's natural oils. While it is harmless, some parents are bothered by the way it looks. You may loosen it with a soft toothbrush dipped in olive oil; follow up with a mild baby shampoo.

Newborn Jaundice

- Jaundice occurs when bilirubin (a normal byproduct of the breakdown of red blood cells) builds up in a baby's bloodstream. It is a common condition, but can require treatment. It appears as yellowing of the skin and/or eyes.
- To determine if your baby has jaundice, press lightly on their forehead or nose. If the pressed area appears yellow, your baby likely has jaundice.
- Signs of worsening jaundice include lethargy, trouble feeding and a high pitched cry.
- **Call your baby's provider if you think your baby has jaundice.**

Circumcision Care

- Your baby should have an ointment-saturated dressing in place on the tip of his penis for 12-24 hours after circumcision. Change this dressing with each diaper change, using plenty of ointment on a fresh piece of gauze.
- After 12-24 hours, baby no longer needs the dressing. Continue to apply ointment to the tip of the penis, or just on the diaper itself, for 4-7 days.
- Try to avoid soaps. If you need to wash your baby, just use warm water.
- Call your baby's provider if you notice any bleeding, redness, swelling, drainage or pus.

Car Seat Safety

- Children should ride rear facing until they are at least two years old. They need time for their soft bones to strengthen!
- NEVER put your baby in the front seat unless advised by a professional.
- The shoulder harness straps should be placed at or below the shoulders. Straps should be snug; you should be able to place just a finger between your baby's shoulder and the strap. The retainer clip should be at armpit level, not at the belly or the neck.
- Be sure to check the owner's manual for installation information and for tips on properly fitting the harness to your baby.
- Car seats and their installation may be inspected free of charge at various locations. BeSeatSmart.org has a list of car seat inspection sites and lots of other important car seat info.
- We have our own car seat inspector here in the birthing center! Ask about getting an appointment with Kay: (802)888-8304

Protecting Your Baby From Illness

- The best way to protect your baby from illness is to wash your hands. Be sure to wash hands thoroughly for 20 seconds and have others do the same before touching your baby.
- Stay away from people who are sick. Newborns have under-developed immune systems, and their little bodies have a low threshold for fevers (you should call the provider for a temperature of 100.4°F and above). Make sure all visitors are healthy, and that they wash their hands before holding the baby.
- Do not smoke near the baby. Secondhand smoke weakens the immune system, and can make it more likely that your baby will get sick.
- Make sure your baby stays up to date on vaccinations.

Sibling Adjustment

- Bringing a new baby home changes the dynamic in your family, and it may take a little while for your other children to adjust. It is important to be compassionate and patient, and to give them time to work out their complicated feelings.
- Jealousy is, of course, a common response when a new baby enters the fold. This is completely normal, and you may need to help your older kiddo(s) manage these big emotions. Validate what they are feeling, and let them know your love for them has not changed. Give lots of extra snuggles.
- Expect regressions in things like sleeping, eating and toilet training. This is a sign that your older child doesn't feel like they are getting enough attention. Try to provide opportunities for alone time with the big sister(s) or brother(s), and create opportunities for them to be recognized and feel special.

Enjoy your baby, and please don't hesitate to reach out to us or to your baby's provider with any questions!