

HealthyActions

Achieving Your Goals for Healthy Living



Baby Steps: What to Expect After Baby is Born

It is wonderful to bring your new baby home. You might be a little worried too. There are many new things to learn. Don't be afraid to ask your doctor or nurse questions. Ask for help from friends and family who have children.

Do not ever shake your baby.

Shaking a baby can cause serious injury and sometimes death.¹ If you need to wake your baby, gently rub them or blow gently on their cheek.

Hold your baby during feedings.

- Babies need touching and stroking.

How do I handle my newborn safely?

- Always support your newborn baby's head and neck.¹ Pay attention when you carry or lay your child down. Cradle and protect your baby's head.
- When you put your baby in a carrier, stroller, or car seat, make sure you have the baby safe and secured.¹
- Infants aren't ready for rough play such as being bounced on the knee or thrown in the air.¹

When should you feed your baby?

Babies should be fed whenever they seem hungry.¹ A baby might show you they are hungry by:

- Crying
- Making sucking noises
- Putting fingers in their mouth

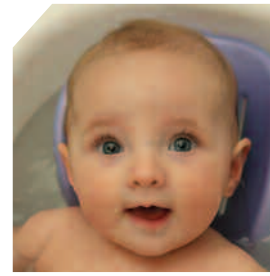
In your baby's first month, you will feed them every 2 to 3 hours.² As they grow older, babies need to be fed less often. A feeding should last about 10 to 20 minutes.²

If you are breast feeding let your baby nurse for 10-15 minutes at each breast.¹ If you are using formula, your baby will probably take 2-3 ounces at a feeding.¹

When breast feeding, how do you know if your baby is getting enough to eat?

Your baby is likely eating enough if they¹:

- Seem satisfied
- Sleep well
- Have about 6 wet diapers a day
- Are gaining weight
- Have about 3 stools a day



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When you put your baby to sleep, place them on their back.

This lowers the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).¹ You want to avoid having things in your baby's crib that can get tangled around them or block their mouth or nose: Take these things out of your baby's crib before sleep time¹:

- All fluffy bedding, quilts, and sheepskins
- Stuffed animals
- Pillows

Keep your baby in an upright position for 10-15 minutes after feeding. This can help prevent or lessen spitting up.¹

Is it important to burp my baby when feeding?

Babies need to be burped because they swallow air when they are feeding.¹ This can make them fussy. Burp your baby with each feeding¹:

- Every 2 to 3 ounces if you bottle feed
- When you switch breasts, if you breast feed

Here is one way to burp your baby¹:

- Hold your baby upright with your baby's head on your shoulder
- Support your baby's head and back with one hand
- With the other hand, gently pat or rub your baby's back

How often will I need to change diapers?

Your baby will need a diaper change about 10 times a day.¹ Before changing diapers, make sure you have all the supplies you'll need.

How often should I bathe my newborn?

Newborns need a bath only 2 or 3 times a week.² Give your baby sponge baths until the umbilical cord falls off.² Then you can give your baby a bath in a tub filled with 2 inches of warm water.² Be sure to always support your baby's head.

How much should my baby sleep?

Newborn babies sleep 16 hours a day or more. They usually sleep for 3 to 4 hours at a time.¹

How do I care for the umbilical cord area?

Ask your doctor for care advice. The cord stump will change color, from yellow to brown or black, before it falls off. This is normal.¹ Call your doctor if¹:

- The area becomes reddened
- The area has a foul odor
- Any draining comes from the area

Sources

1. KidsHealth. A Guide for First-Time Parents. http://kidshealth.org/PageManager.jsp?dn=KidsHealth&lic=1&ps=107&cat_id=20058&article_set=22989
2. JAMA. Caring for a Newborn Baby. <http://www.hmc.psu.edu/healthinfo/articles/womens/newborn.pdf>