

Newborn Care

Bringing Baby Home



WILLAMETTE VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER BIRTHING CENTER

CONGRATULATIONS on your new arrival

You are the proud parent of a new baby boy or girl! These next few weeks and months will be busy, tiring, and wonderful as you learn to care for your infant.

We hope you have the support of those around you to help take care of meals, cleaning and anything else you might need as you adjust to parenthood. A baby changes your life completely, and so we recommend that you take full advantage of the help and support offered by parents, siblings, neighbors and friends.

Here are some basic newborn care tips that will help ease you into the transitions that come with bringing home a new baby.



GENERAL CARE



Well-baby exams
monitor infants'
growth and
development.

Now that your baby is born, you will be scheduled to bring your baby in for well-infant exams to monitor their growth and development, as well as to talk about routine care and any concerns

you may have. It is a good

idea to bring your spouse along

on these exams if possible so that you both understand how to handle day-to-day tasks and any problems such as fever, vomiting, diarrhea, crying spells or feeding problems. Immunizations often accompany these exams. You can also download our Childhood Immunizations e-book for basic immunization information.

Making Your Appointments

It's important to attend scheduled well-baby exams. They normally occur at birth, two weeks, two months, four months, six months, nine months, 12 months, 15 months, 18 months, and 24 months, and each year thereafter. At the appointment, your pediatrician will monitor your baby's development through measurements and a series of questions. They will also complete a physical exam, including:

- **Head**, including fontanels (soft spot)
- **Ears** (for function, fluid or infection)
- **Eyes** (for function, any discharge)
- **Mouth** (for thrush or teething)
- **Skin** (for any skin conditions/rashes)
- **Heart and lungs** (for function)
- **Abdomen** (for function, hernias)
- **Hips and legs** (for function)
- **Genitalia** (for development)

Feel free to ask your pediatrician any questions about issues that may concern you.

VISITORS

Now that you are home, many friends, family and neighbors will want to visit you and your baby. Remember, if you are not feeling up to it, these visits can be tiring, and you have the right to let visitors know they'll need to come back at another time. They can also be wonderful opportunities for friends and family to get to know your new baby in a private setting.

Be sure you do not allow anyone who has or has had a contagious illness, or been around someone else who has been sick, to visit your baby. Diseases that are minor for adults or older children can be serious for infants. Even for those who are healthy, keep touching of your baby to a minimum and ask anyone who wants to hold him to wash his or her hands first.

Umbilical Cord

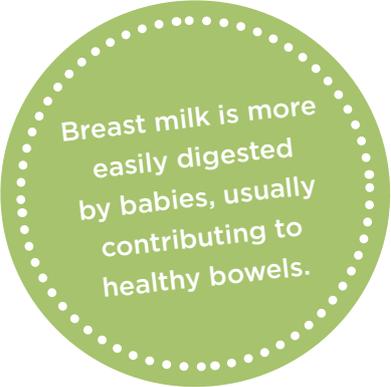
Your baby's umbilical cord will fall off by itself after one to four weeks after birth. While it is healing, it will form a scab. Make sure you let it heal and fall off on its own. To keep it clean, you can use soap and clean, warm water. Be sure to follow your baby's doctor's instructions on how to do this. Sponge baths are recommended (no tub baths!) until the cord falls off.

After it falls off, it is normal for clear or blood-tinged discharge to come from the navel. However, if you notice oozing for several days, associated with a bad smell or redness, or if your baby has a fever, contact your baby's doctor immediately.



Use soap and clean, warm water to clean the umbilical cord site.

BOWEL FUNCTION



Breast milk is more easily digested by babies, usually contributing to healthy bowels.

From the day your baby is born to the time he is several months old, he or she will have many changes in the number, color and consistency of his stool. As long as your baby is eating normally and has no symptoms of illness, these

changes are normal. Formula-fed babies usually have yellowish-tan stools and breastfed babies have liquid, runny, mustard color stools. All babies can have stools that vary in color, from gray to green to brown, and the number can vary from six to eight per day, to one every other day.

Your Baby's Weight

Once they are born, infants typically lose five to eight percent of their birth weight in the first few days of life. By the time they are 10 days old, most have regained their birth weight, doubled it by six months and tripled it by one year.

Newborn baby weight varies widely between infants and can be influenced by factors as diverse as size of parents, multiple births (twins, etc.), birth order, gender, and the mother's health and nutrition during pregnancy. It's best to not compare your baby's weight to other babies, since all children are different and grow independently.

If you're worried about infant growth, consult your child's doctor. Keep in mind, however, that many healthy babies go through brief periods when they stop gaining weight or even lose a little weight. A doctor would likely be concerned only if an otherwise healthy baby doesn't gain weight from one well-baby exam to the next.

SLEEP

Most infants wake up every two to three hours for feeding until they are six to eight weeks old, but each baby tends to establish his own sleeping pattern. Many babies will sleep for several hours right after a feeding, while others take short naps. It is important that you plan your own rest periods to match your baby's, as it will give you more energy throughout the day.

When sleeping, place your baby on his back to sleep. Be sure you have a firm mattress and a safety-approved crib. Remove fluffy toys or loose bedding from the crib and keep your baby's head and face uncovered.

Skin Care

Newborn babies often have harmless skin blemishes and rashes. Many blemishes are caused by hormones or the shedding of dead skin, and are best left alone.

Bathing

Your baby's doctor may have you give your baby a sponge bath until the umbilical cord is healed and, if you have a boy, the circumcision is healed. Please check with your infant's doctor and follow the directions you are given regarding tub bathing.



Newborn babies often have harmless skin blemishes and rashes.

SAFETY

If you are a new parent, it is often overwhelming to think of the potential dangers to your child. The best way to alleviate your worry is to anticipate any risks ahead of time and take steps to be sure your home is safe for your baby.

One of the biggest dangers to your child is Shaken Baby Syndrome. **NEVER shake or toss your baby into the air.** It can cause brain damage, blindness or even death. No matter how frustrated, angry or tired you get, remember to never shake your baby.

Most of the common problems that occur with your baby are normal. However, always remember that as a parent, your intuition is important. If you are concerned about your baby, please call your provider.



Resources:

A New Beginning: Your Personal Guide to Postpartum Care

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/infant-and-toddler-health/MY00362>



**WILLAMETTE VALLEY
MEDICAL CENTER**

2700 Stratus Avenue
McMinnville, OR 97128
www.wvmcweb.com