

My Newborn and Me

Congratulations! Is there any greater gift, than the gift of life? Your baby is full of possibility. Let's work together to create a world of love, health and joy for your baby.

The World from your Newborn's Perspective

- Your baby can see your face from 9-12 inches away. She will look for dark objects and red colored objects.
- His vision is approximately 20/200 and rapidly improves over the next few months. **It is normal for him to cross his eyes often** and this will improve by 2 months of age.
- Your baby hears your voice and may become quiet and calm with gentle speaking.
- Your baby will respond to loud sounds and sudden movements with a "**Moro Response**." She spreads her arms and hands out and shakes them as if startled. This is natural and it is not dangerous, nor is it a seizure. It will go away by 4-5 months of age. Seizures are more rhythmic jerking or head bobbing. Take a short video if you are concerned.
- Your baby did not experience "air" while in your womb. She is learning about it now as she swallows air while feeding and crying. **Hiccups, sneezes, burps and toots are all normal** and a natural part of life. She will learn how to manage air on her own with time. She will find it funny by 2 years old! You can help by burping her every 5-10 minutes during feeds and by lifting the bottle up (if she bottle feeds) so that only formula (not air) is in the nipple. Simethicone drops (over the counter in various brand names) are safe to use with each feeding (0.3mL) to relieve stomach gas bubbles.
- Your baby could sleep whenever he wanted while inside the womb because he had a constant supply of food. Now he must learn to wake up and eat! Some newborns awaken every 2-3 hours on their own to eat, but others may sleep to the point of becoming dehydrated and jaundiced. **Please awaken your newborn at least every 3 hours to eat.**
- Your baby did not need to pass stool inside the womb, but now he passes stool with every feed! This is a natural response called the "**Gastro-Colic Reflex**." Don't worry; he is absorbing everything his body needs. It's not "just going right through him." He will pull his legs in and out and may turn bright red and grunt as he is stooling. This is normal.

Showing love to your baby:

Always respond to crying during the first two months of life. This is your baby's most developed form of communication. You cannot spoil your baby during this time. By responding to her, you teach her that you are in control and she is safe, creating strong attachment. It will be much easier to teach her to sleep through the night around 2-4 months of age if she has a strong attachment from the beginning.

Most babies have a few hours of **more frequent crying episodes in the afternoon/early evening**. Look for signs of hunger (turning toward your breast, opening her mouth, rooting) and try to feed her before the point of crying. Check that she is dry and clean after every feeding. Touch her hands and feet to see if she is cold or hot to decide upon the

amount of clothing. Generally a home temperature of 74-76 degrees F is best. Swaddle her upper body snugly with a thin blanket to mimic how she felt inside the womb, but keep the swaddle loose around the legs to allow normal hip development.

If she continues to cry, check a rectal temperature. **Fever for a newborn is 100.4 degrees F and low temperature for a newborn is < 97.5 degrees F.** For either of those readings call your pediatrician **immediately** as your infant may need to **be seen in the ER.** Bring her to your pediatrician's office for evaluation if she is fussy but normal temp.

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/fever/Pages/How-to-Take-a-Childs-Temperature.aspx>

Teach your baby to eat enough to fill her tummy and hold her over for 2-3 hours.

Baby may fall asleep after just a few minutes on the breast because it is very soothing to her. This sets up a pattern of inadequate "milk let down", lack of "hind milk" (which contains more fat), more crying, extremely frequent feedings, and exhausted parents. Your first act of loving discipline for your baby is to **teach her to stay awake to breastfeed for at least 20 minutes** (10 minutes on each side). You can do this by burping her every time she loses her "latch." If she is still "latched-on" but asleep, open up her blanket and clothes, uncover and tap/tickle her toes, talk to her in an animated (rather than soothing) voice, and gently wipe her forehead and feet with a cool wet washcloth. Be patient with her. She is transitioning from the womb and learning to eat.

Breast feed your baby.

Breastfeeding is the best way to give your newborn healthy nutrition. There are only a few reasons that a mother should not breast feed her baby and they are generally related to the mother's health. If your own doctor prescribes you medications, check with your pediatrician to see if they are safe for breastfeeding. If you find breastfeeding painful or have other concerns, **please read "BreastFeeding Made Simple"** here on this website. Baby's immune system and attachment will be much healthier if he is breastfed for at least the first 9-12 months of life. Once your baby is breastfeeding well, it is a good idea to pump a bottle a day so that Daddy can have some feeding time with Baby and allow you to get rest. Rest is important for your milk supply. One bottle a day is OK!

Breastfed babies should receive Vitamin D drops (400 IU) once per day.

Play with your baby.

Sing him songs, listen to music you like, talk to him in any languages you know, give him gentle massages with baby cream. Read aloud to him while you nurse. It can be anything your like to read, not just children's stories. Avoid letting your baby view any screen time during the first year of life. **Let yourself have fun!**

"A baby is God's opinion that the world should go on."

— Carl Sandburg, American poet