

NEWBORN PRO-TIPS

From the desk of a real-life pro...

Appetite: In my experience, the earliest and most consistent sign that something serious is wrong is a poor appetite. Baby with a serious infection? Poor appetite. Baby with a metabolic disease? Poor appetite. Baby dropped on his head? That's right, poor appetite. So, keep an eye on the baby's appetite. Feed him often - every 2 hours during the day to start with. And call if he skips meals or shows no energy for or interest in feeding.

Bathing: You can bathe your baby daily. Use a shallow plastic baby bath with just a couple inches of water. Make sure your hot water heater is set at less than 120F. Don't use soap for the first few weeks when your baby's skin is very sensitive. And NEVER leave your infant unattended in the bath.

Car Seats: Your local police or fire department will install a seat for you if desired! The car seat should be placed in the back seat and facing the rear. When installing, sit on the car seat or base if needed, to get it in as tight as possible. The car seat should not wiggle when installed.

Changing a Poopy Diaper: A neat trick is to always place an open fresh diaper, like a clam shell, around the old diaper before removing the dirty one. That way if your baby "isn't done yet" any further poop will land in the new diaper instead of on your carpet. When removing the dirty diaper, use it to swipe the bum.

Circumcision Care: After your baby boy has been circumcised, his penis will look red and raw. There may be a piece of gauze over the end. This can be removed after the first day. Keep the irritated area covered with a thick layer Vaseline for the first week. Whenever your baby pees or poops, you can wipe off just the top layer of Vaseline and apply more. You may also want to put a little Vaseline in the front of the diaper itself to prevent the healing penis from sticking to the diaper. It'll take 2 weeks for all the swelling and redness to resolve.

Crib Safety: Sudden Infant Death Syndrome is a serious concern for all new parents. Three simple steps will significantly cut the risk of SIDS. When laying your baby down to sleep, always place him on his back and remember to raise the crib rail. Make sure you are using a firm baby mattress. And do not expose your child to cigarette smoke.

Fathers: You can always tell a new father by the way they forget they have elbows. Seriously, watch them carry a newborn. They're so stiff and act like they have little non-functional T-Rex arms. Relax! You CAN extend your arms while picking up, carrying and placing down a newborn.

Infections & Fevers: Newborns are especially susceptible to infections passed by dirty hands. Every family member should wash his or her hands before touching your newborn. Sick family members, especially those with fever, should not touch your newborn until they are well. Any cold symptoms or (especially) poor feeding in your newborn should be brought to Dr. B's attention. If your baby appears ill, check his temperature (rectal temperature is most accurate). If it is 100F or more, call the office immediately.

Smoke or Vape Exposure: Ask yourself: "What's more important? My child, or my cigarettes?" Smoke or vape exposure during pregnancy can lead to poorly developed newborn lungs and low birth weight. Exposure after birth can help cause infections, allergies and asthma, and is a HUGE risk factor for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. So, for the sake of your child, if you haven't stopped smoking yet, now would be a good time! Keep all cigarette, cigar, pipe smoke and vape vapor/smoke away from your infant. ZERO smoking or vaping in the home or car ("I roll the windows down" won't cut it). Even the smell of cigarettes can irritate the fragile lungs, nose and throat linings of a newborn.

Umbilical Cord Care: Now the newborn nursery staff is going to tell you not to mess with the cord, but you listen to ol' Dr. Bee! Clean the base of the umbilical cord (way down where the cord attaches to the skin) with alcohol at least once a day. You may have to pull up or down on the cord to see the base. Dipping a Q-Tip in alcohol and wiping at the base is an efficient way to get into this tight area. Cleaning with alcohol will not make it fall off quicker, but it will keep the cord from smelling bad. The cord should fall off within 2 weeks. Do not get the cord wet while bathing - it will definitely start to stink.