

Newborns

Newborn babies look and act very different from older infants. Parents are often afraid something is wrong. The following describes common concerns parents have about their baby.

Their heads look big in comparison to their body. It may be molded (pointed, lop-sided or out of shape) from coming through the birth canal, or, from the position it was inside the uterus. The head rounds out within the first month. Babies have two soft spots that can be felt on the top and back of the head. All babies have these and they are different sizes depending on the baby.

Babies' eyes look dark blue-gray, sometimes black. Eye color can usually be determined by 3 months of age, but sometimes not until 6 months or older.

Breasts on boys and girls may be swollen and leak milk. This is because of hormones that go from the mother to the baby during pregnancy. Hormones also cause mucus and sometimes blood from a baby girl's vagina and occasionally, they can have a small menstrual period. The white discharge can be cleaned during bath time.

Feet and legs are often crooked due to the baby's position in the uterus. Birthmarks can be present at birth or can develop later. All newborn babies eat, sleep, cry, yawn, belch, hiccup, sneeze, cough, startle and stare. Nasal congestion is normal in newborns because their nasal passages are small. Sneezing is your baby's way of getting mucus or lint out of the nose, and is a manifestation of a maturing neurological system, this will become less frequent by 2 months of age. Babies may also have periodic breathing – they breathe fast and then slow down at times. Hiccups seem to come after feedings and are normal in most babies. Babies like to stare at bright lights and at your face when you hold them close. They also seem to stare in the direction of sound. Any loud noise or sudden movement will cause them to startle and cry. This is normal. Your baby can also move a little on his tummy. Your baby's head is a little floppy, so you will need to keep it from falling forward or backward suddenly. When they are on their tummies, new babies can turn their heads from side to side.

Most babies lose weight after they are born. Your baby should be back at his birth weight by the time he is 2 weeks old. He will gain almost one ounce each day for the next few months (about half a pound a week).