

Common Concerns

Spitting Up

Most babies spit up, some more than others. Do not feed your baby too much. Burp your baby often. Do not bounce your baby after feedings. Some babies do better held upright for about an hour after feeding. In general, if your baby spits and is gaining weight well, it is not a medical problem. You can also place a wedge under their mattress to elevate their head when sleeping. If your baby is vomiting and not keeping formula down, you can give Pedialyte for 2 feedings, but NOT WATER. **Breastfeeding should be continued.**

Rashes

Babies often get newborn rashes within the first 3 to 4 weeks of life. Most of these rashes are benign, and will go away within 1 month. The most common causes of rashes are: detergents, some fabrics, fabric softeners, soap left in clothes, new clothes, sensitive skin, rubbing, lotions and oils. The best treatment depends on what caused the rash. Keep the skin clean and dry and keep things from rubbing on the rash.

Cradle Cap

Cradle cap (seborrheic dermatitis) is scaly, thick or yellowish crusts that form mainly over the soft spot of a baby's scalp. Bumps may also form on the forehead and cheeks. Skin on the eyebrows and behind the ears may also be scaly. Wash the scalp daily, using a soft brush to massage the scalp as you wash his hair. Rinse the hair well and massage it again. You can use baby oil or Vaseline to moisturize the scalp before washing, making it easier to take the scales off.

Umbilical Hernia

Your baby has an umbilical hernia if the naval sticks out and gets larger when he cries. You may not notice it at birth, but the hernia gets larger in the first 2-3 months. You do not need to do anything about the hernia. Belly band and coins taped over the naval are NOT helpful, because they keep the area moist and cause infection. These hernias usually close without treatment when your child is about 1 ½ to 2 years old.

Noisy Breathing

Colds and congestion: Newborn babies breathe through their nose - they do not know that they can breathe through their mouth yet. Any mucus can make their breathing noisy. Dry air causes more mucus. If your baby's nose seems clogged, use saline (salt water) nose drops - you can buy these drops over the counter, one product is made by "Little Noses". Keep your baby's nose clear of mucus, especially just before feedings and bedtime. Place a few drops into each nostril and use the bulb syringe to suction, making sure to hold the nostril that you are not suctioning closed -this allows more mucus to come up through the suction. You may repeat this whenever needed. If you see the mucus, use a bulb syringe to clear the nose. Your baby may sleep better sitting up in an infant seat when he is congested.

- **DO NOT BLOW IN YOUR BABY'S MOUTH!**
- Smoke from cigarettes, pipes and cigars causes congestion, noisy breathing and colds.
- **DO NOT** give your baby cold medicines. They do not help and can cause other problems.

Constipation

Hard stools mean your baby may be constipated. Put 1 to 2 teaspoons of dark karo syrup in 2 ounces of warm water or give 2 ounces of apple prune or pear juice. Offer this between feedings 1 to 2 times a day until your baby's stools soften. Do not give your baby honey.

Illness

Call your doctor if your new baby:

- Will not eat for 2 feedings in a row.
- Vomits 2 feedings in a row.
- Acts "sick" or cannot wake him up.
- Has a fever higher than **100.4 degrees F rectally- this is an emergency.** (if it is 99.4 degrees axillary, take a rectal temperature).
- **DO NOT** use Tylenol or other fever reducers in the first 2 months of life - they can mask a fever.
- **DO NOT** give any over the counter medicines to your baby without asking your doctor first.

Crying

All babies cry. They may be trying to tell you:

- I am hungry
- I want to turn over
- I am too hot
- My tummy hurts
- I am wet
- I am too cold
- I am bored
- Play with me
- I am sleepy

Every baby cries for a while every day and could cry for an hour or more without doing any harm. You will learn which cry means what.

Crying and Sucking

If your baby cries or keeps sucking after or between feedings, you may think he is still hungry. This is not always true. Sucking is normal for newborn babies. Your baby may cry, suck or both to tell you he is uncomfortable after a feeding. If you feed your baby every time he sucks, he will want to eat every 1 to 2 hours and still be fussy. Your baby will end up eating too much. Overly full babies spit up, get constipated, have diarrhea and get gas and tummy aches.

Colic

Babies who cry for 1 to 2 hours at a time for no obvious reason may have colic. The crying seems to happen at the same time of day or night at least 4 days a week. No one knows the cause and there is no real cure. All babies seem to outgrow it by the time they are 3 months old. Your baby may draw his legs up and act like he is having stomach pains. His tummy may swell up with air and he may pass a lot of gas. Nothing - holding, rocking, feeding - seems to help for more than 10 minutes.

Vomiting, diarrhea and fever are **NOT** symptoms of colic. Call your doctor if your baby has vomiting, diarrhea and/or fever with the crying.

Clothing

In general, your baby needs to wear one more layer than you feel comfortable in. Dress him based on the temperature. Some babies are sensitive to certain materials. Watch for skin rashes where the clothes rub. On hot days, keep a light shirt on the baby. This protects him from hot sweaty hands.

- Wash all clothing in baby detergent before it is worn.

Use a mild detergent, such as Dreft, and rinse well. Soaps, some fabric softeners, poorly rinsed diapers and clothes can cause rashes. Do not wash cloth diapers with fabric softener you pour into the washer. These add lanolin to the fabric and cause the diaper to repel rather than absorb moisture.

Taking Baby Out

Whenever the weather is pleasant, take your baby for a walk. Avoid crowded places the first months of your baby's life. Strangers may have colds or illnesses your baby could catch.

- Be sure anyone around the baby is not sick and does not smoke.

Baby-sitters

Every mother needs time to herself on a regular basis. If you do not have parents, grandparents or relatives who can watch your children, you may find a good baby-sitter through friends or church.

To help your sitter do a good job, you need to make a list and put it near the telephone:

- Where you will be and a phone number where you can be reached.
- When you plan to return.
- The name and number of a nearby relative or neighbor.
- The number of your baby's doctor.
- Emergency numbers for police, fire department, ambulance and poison control.
- Your name, address and phone number in case emergency personnel need it.
- What the baby's routine is for the time you are away - nap time, feeding, toys, medicines, etc.