

# Postpartum Instructions for Baby

**Newborn Breathing:** Babies breathe faster than adults at rest, and their respirations (breaths) are sometimes irregular. The average is 30-60 breaths in one minute. Your baby may sound congested, snort, or sneeze after birth - all is normal.

**Body Temperature:** Babies are just miniature people. Their temperature should range between 97.7 and 99.9. A fever is anything over 100.4. Take the baby's temperature under the armpit with a digital thermometer. If your baby feels warm or cool, the first thing to do is unwrap them and put them skin-to-skin. Recheck the temperature. If the temperature is still elevated in 30 minutes, recheck it. A fever of 100.4 or more is a reason to take your baby to the emergency room.

## WHEN TO CALL YOUR MIDWIFE:

- If your baby has a fever of 100.4 or higher

their back. If you see thick mucous or secretions, use the bulb syringe. Always suction the mouth before the nose to prevent the baby from inhaling and choking on the secretions.

**Choking:** Your baby is learning to coordinate breathing and swallowing for the first time. So sometimes, they will gag or choke. The first thing to do is tilt the baby to the side and pat

**Nursing:** Your newborn should eat 8-10 times each day. The feedings may take 30-45 minutes at first, but in the next week or two, they will become more efficient, and the two of you will work out a system that works best for both of you. The baby gets dense, nutritious milk called colostrum. It's exactly what the baby needs. Do not give the baby formula or water unless your midwife or pediatrician has recommended it for a very specific need.

**Diapers:** Your baby's first bowel movements are a dark, tarry, sticky substance called meconium. The baby should pass some meconium in the first 24 hours. This is easily washed off with warm water and coconut/olive oil. Apply oil after diaper changes to make the clean-up easier. Gradually, the meconium changes to a green-brown color, then yellow-green. Babies can have bowel movements after every feeding or once every 3-4 days. A healthy, breastfed baby will not get constipated.

Your baby should urinate in the first 24 hours. Until your milk is in, the wet diapers may not be as frequent. After 2-3 days, diapers should be wet every 3 to 4 hours (paper diapers are very absorbent, so it may be hard to tell; when in doubt, use a small towel, blanket, or washcloth). Sometimes uric acid crystals will be found in a wet diaper. These crystals can look orange/red and be mistaken for blood. Some female babies will pass a small amount of mucus and blood from their vagina.

## WHEN TO CALL YOUR MIDWIFE:

- If your baby has not urinated in more than 6 hours.
- If your baby has not had a bowel movement in 4-5 days.

**Sleeping:** Your baby will sleep most of the day . . . and tend to be awake more at night. Please do not let your baby sleep longer than 2-3 hours at a time until your milk transitions. Safe sleep guidelines include:

- Babies should room in with their parents -- it's good for all of you.
- Put your baby on their back to sleep.
- Keep the room cool (70o- - 74o).
- Do not over-dress the baby. Dress the baby so they feel warm (but not hot) to the touch.
- Do not put any blankets, pillows, toys, or bumper pads in the crib
- You may swaddle the baby tightly, but no loose blankets.

**Crying/Soothing:** Your baby has had a big day too! They are adjusting to life outside of the womb. The most comforting thing you can do for your baby is keep them close to you. Skin-to-skin care (with either mom or dad) is ideal. If the baby is crying inconsolably, do a “head-to-toe” inspection and think through the types of things that may be distressing to your baby. Call your midwife if you can’t soothe or calm the baby within 20-30 minutes. We will be glad to help you figure out what’s going on.

**Cord Care:** To prevent infection, keep the stump clean and dry. Do not put alcohol, ointments, or powders on the cord. Fold the diaper down to ensure air circulates around the cord. If you see signs of infection around the base of the cord, call your midwife.

**Eyes:** You may notice red spots on the whites of your baby’s eyes. These are broken blood vessels from birth. These will go away independently, usually in the first couple of weeks. Your baby’s tear ducts are immature and do not work fully right after birth. This means that bacteria can easily grow without the flushing of tears. If your baby’s eyes get a yellow-green discharge or become crusty, you can wipe them with a warm, wet cotton ball. Breastmilk is naturally antibacterial and makes a handy eyewash.

**Bathing:** Your baby will not need a full bath until the umbilical stump falls off. For these first few days, just wipe off the “dirty” or “stinky” parts with a warm washcloth. Ensure the folds under the neck, in the groin, and behind the ears are clean.

**Signs of Wellness:** Like all people, healthy babies have a good appetite, normal bowel movements, and react/respond to their environment. The baby’s breathing may be irregular but should not be labored. If the baby is struggling to breathe, call your midwife immediately.

**Skin color:** Jaundice after 24 hours is a perfectly normal process. The byproducts (Bilirubin) of that normal process are yellow. If too much of it accumulates, it can be problematic. Feeding them often is the best way to ensure your

#### WHEN TO CALL YOUR MIDWIFE:

- If your baby has yellow skin in the first 24 hours.
- If your baby is too sleepy to wake for frequent nursing.

baby stays healthy. Bowel movements will remove the bilirubin from their system. You may also want to hold your baby in sunlight for 15-30 minutes daily to help his body process the bilirubin. Please contact your midwife if your baby’s skin turns yellow before 24 hours.

**Newborn Hearing Screen:** The State of Texas recommends that every baby has their hearing tested. We recommend taking your baby to an audiologist for a newborn hearing screen.

**Well Baby Check:** Contact your pediatrician to determine when they would like to start care. We will continue to care for the newborn for 6 weeks. We will also do the Newborn Metabolic Screen at 2 days and 2 weeks.

**Car Seat:** The State of Texas requires that all newborns be restrained in a car seat. Your newborn should be well secured into a rear-facing car seat anytime you take them.

Call us if:

- You or your baby runs a fever over 100.4\* F.
- Your baby turns yellow in the first 24 hours.
- Your baby’s mouth, lips, or trunk turn blue.
- You have any questions or concerns.
- In case of an emergency, call 911.

