

When Your Baby Comes

Taking Care of Your Baby



Dads Can Feed Baby, Too – Direct breastfeeding, at the breast, is the best way for your partner to keep up a large milk supply, but you can offer breastmilk from a bottle when your partner needs a break. Experts typically recommend waiting about three weeks, or until breastfeeding is going well, before introducing breastmilk in a bottle. After that, feel free to help feed your baby. Newborns eat small, but frequent meals. Start with 2 ounces of breastmilk in a bottle and if your baby still seems hungry, offer a little more.

If you want to warm a bottle of breastmilk or infant formula, hold the bottle under warm (not hot) running water right before feeding. Always test by dripping some on your wrist to be sure it's not too hot. Do not use a microwave oven

to warm the bottle. Test your bottle nipples from time to time to make sure the right amount of breastmilk is coming out. It should come out in drops, not make a stream.

Burp your baby at a natural break or at the end of a feeding by gently rubbing his back while supporting him in an upright position. If there is any breastmilk left in the bottle after feeding your baby, the leftovers can still be safely used within 2 hours. If you are formula feeding, throw out any formula left in the bottle after feeding your baby. Thoroughly wash bottles after every use. The germs from your baby's mouth will get into the milk in the bottle and could make your baby sick if you feed him the same milk later.

After you've fed, burped and changed the baby's diaper, let him nap on your bare chest. Tell your baby a story. Even while asleep, your baby's brain is learning about language. Babies love skin-to-skin contact with their dads and they like to hear their dad's deeper voice. Be proud to support your baby's breastfeeding mom. Breastfeeding is the best thing for your baby's health and hers.

When Does My Baby Need Other Foods? – Your baby should have only breastmilk or formula until he is about 6 months old. Speak with your pediatrician before you introduce baby food to your child. Your doctor may refer you to WIC or give you general information about which foods to begin with and a schedule for introducing each new food type.

Do not give your baby cow's milk, soft drinks, tea, fruit juices or anything besides mother's breastmilk or infant formula that's been prepared properly.

Do not add baby cereal or other thickeners to your baby's diet unless your child has special medical needs and your baby's doctor recommends it.

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Dressing Your Baby – Newborn babies can't control their body temperature like older children. Undress and re-dress your baby a little at a time so that he never has to be naked and get too cold. You can put a towel or light blanket over the baby's bare tummy to help him feel safe and calm.

Grooming Your Baby – All newborns have peeling, flaky skin. This is normal. Talk with your pediatrician before using lotion or oils on your baby. Newborn babies also do not need a bath every day, and in most cases there is little need to use soaps or other cleansers. Just wipe your baby down with a damp cloth using warm (not hot) water. Any time you place your baby in water, make sure that the temperature isn't too hot. Testing with your elbow should allow you to see if the temperature of the water will be just right for your child.

Your baby's fingernails need to be kept short. Using a nail file or emery board is the safest method. However, it can be time-consuming. A second alternative is to trim nails carefully with baby nail clippers that have rounded tips. Do not use adult-sized nail clippers — you may accidentally clip the tip of your baby's finger or toe instead of the nail.

Don't put anything in your baby's ears or nose. These places will take care of themselves. Just wipe around the outside. Never use Q-tips or cotton swabs. They can damage the ear. If you are concerned that your baby's ears have an abnormal amount of wax build-up, speak with the pediatrician. The doctor may decide to do a cleaning in the office or give you instructions on how to clean your baby's ears.

Baby's First Doctor Visit –

You will need to schedule a visit with your baby's pediatrician before you leave the hospital. During this visit, the doctor will check your baby's height and weight to make sure he is growing properly. The doctor will also ask questions about your baby's eating, sleeping and diaper soiling patterns. Use this visit to ask questions about your baby's health and development.



Reference:

Texas Office of the Attorney General. (2019). Dad's guide to fatherhood. Texas Health and Human Services. <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/sites/default/files/files/child-support/Publications/13-06-15131DadsGuidetoFatherhood-ACC.pdf>