



Your Newborn Baby: First Month

Congratulations on new arrival! For most parents first month at home with baby is challenging, sometime stressful and certainly full of questions. You will find answers to most common questions here. There are total nine topics. **Please read all of them very carefully.**

1) Feeding:

At this age baby needs only breast milk or formula. Do not give juice, water or other drinks. Do not give solid food or cereals. Do not give honey. Breast milk has great benefits for your baby. Exclusive breastfeeding until 4 months of age is the best. We will talk about introducing solid foods at 4 months of age. We strongly recommend and encourage all moms to continue to breast feed until one year of age. If you are planning to go back to work you could always pump breast milk and store it in the freezer for long time.

Most babies feed every two to three hours during the day, and every four to five hours at night. If your baby wants to feed more often, try a pacifier. Sometimes an infant just wants to suck and not feed. Many times the baby just wants to be held and enjoy your voice and company. **Do not just feed the baby every time he is crying.** If you are planning to use formula, please read label carefully first and follow instruction for mixing. Hold the bottle while feeding, do not prop it. Check formula temperature with back of your wrist before feeding.

Breastfed babies usually feed about 10 minutes on each side. Nursing mom should relax; drink lots of fluids and breast feed frequently in the beginning (every 2 -3 hours). This helps to achieve adequate milk production. If your baby appears satisfied after feeding, having 6 or more wet diapers in a 24 hours and gaining weight adequately, then this is general indicator that your baby is getting sufficient milk. **Both bottle fed and breast fed babies automatically regulate amount of milk they drink and frequency of feeding. There are no fixed magic numbers. There is no fixed time table. Adequate weight gain is good indicator of adequate feeding.** Infants will gradually drink more as they gain weight and, in doing so, they will feed less frequently. Do not force feed your baby. After a few months of life most infants take 32-36 ounces of milk in a day. Medical checkup visits at age 3 to 4 days of life and again at 2 weeks are important to evaluate your baby's progress.

Feeding time is also good time to show love to your baby and develop bonds. Look at, smile at and talk at your baby during feeding. Have fun. Enjoy your baby. Enjoy parenthood. Do not worry about spoiling your baby. There is no more precious gift than love which you could give to your baby.

2) Sleep: Babies at this age sleep most of the time (16 or more hours a day). Most often they have their "days and nights" mixed up. Every baby wakes up multiple times at night. Just hang in there it gets better with time. You can bathe your baby two times a day: 10 AM and 3PM. This often results in good improvement in sleep pattern. **When your baby sleeps you should also nap.** This will help you avoid over fatigue. Avoid excessive visitors and unnecessary disturbance. Please place your baby in his crib on his back. This position reduces risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). **REMEMBER BACK TO SLEEP.** Please use a firm mattress.

3) Stool: Some babies have bowel movements after every feeding and others will only go every 3 or 4 days. **Both patterns are normal.** It is normal for a baby to strain and turn red in the face when having a bowel moment. This is normal too. As long as baby has soft stools, do not worry about it. **This is not constipation.** Breastfed babies usually have small, frequent, and watery stools. If your baby has a hard stool or is having blood in stool, your baby needs to be checked in office.

Many babies are fussy at this age. This does not mean they have colic. It takes them several weeks to get adjusted to world outside womb. If you are concerned your baby is excessively fussy. Please make an appointment to have your baby checked.

4) Bathing: You can bath your baby daily. Give sponge bath until umbilical cord falls off. After umbilical cord falls off you can give tub bath. Never leave your baby unattended in a bath tub even for a minute. Babies can drown in few inches of water. Set water heater thermostat at 120 F. Check water temperature with elbow or wrist before bathing. Carefully clean drool and formula from face and neck. Also clean genital area with plain water only. Clean private area of your baby girl from front to back. Do not use bubble baths. Newborn skin normally does not require any ointments or cream. Sometimes when skin becomes dry and cracked you could use baby lotion.

5) Umbilical cord care: Many new parents are afraid of cleaning the naval cord. There is no pain sensation in the naval cord. Do not be afraid to clean cord properly. At every diaper change, use Q- tip moistened in rubbing alcohol to clean the naval. Make sure to move the cord and clean the area between skin and base of cord really well. You may see a little blood at the time of cleaning. This is normal. Naval cord usually separates between 2 weeks to 2 months of age.

6) Safety:

- A. Use approved car seat every time baby is traveling. Infant car seats should be placed in a back seat facing backwards. **NEVER leave baby in car alone even for a minute. REMEMBER to take the baby with you.**
- B. Avoid falls: Do not leave baby unattended on changing table. Do not leave your baby on any surface from which she can fall. Do not let young siblings carry young infant. Be careful to avoid tripping. Do not use walker. They have been associated with injury.
- C. Never leave your baby alone with pets or siblings. Both pets and siblings can get jealous and injure the baby.
- D. Avoid burns: Never drink hot drinks near baby. Do not keep baby's bassinet/crib very close to heater. Install smoke detectors and carbon monoxide alarms in your house. Check water before bath and milk before feeding as described above. Avoid exposure to direct sunlight. Babies sunburn easily.
- E. Avoid choking and suffocation: Avoid sleeping with baby. Do not leave baby on your bed. Do not put pillows in crib. Use tight fitting mattress in crib. Do not place wall hangings near crib. Use safe pacifier, one which is made in one piece. Do not put a necklace on an infant or tie the pacifier around the baby's neck.
- F. Cigarette smoke is bad for the baby. It increases the risk of SIDS, ear infections, and lung infections.
- G. If you are tired, frustrated: **Ask for help.** Take a break and rest. **Never shake your baby.**

7) FEVER: Fever (Rectal temperature above 100.4 F) in babies less than 2 months of **age is a medical emergency.** **If your baby has fever, please call us immediately.** Do not delay. Do not use Tylenol. I recommend digital rectal thermometer. They are easy to use, cause less confusion (especially when you are tired and sleepy) and reasonably priced.

8) Continuity of care: Medical home concept for your baby.

Medical home concept for kids is a TERRIFIC concept! This means having one Pediatrician / doctor's office for a child where her all pediatric medical needs are served. This includes all well checkups, all shots, sports physicals, acute illnesses like ear infections and sore throats, and management of chronic problems like asthma, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and diabetes.

Recent research has suggested that children who develop a long-term relationship with a pediatrician are healthier and hospitalized less than children who switch off between several doctors' offices, the ER, the walk-in clinic, urgent clinics and the local health department. The fragmented care approach to a child's health means no single doctor knows you and your child well. **Hence, we want all children to get continuous care at one office.** When you choose us to be your child's pediatrician, we want to meet those needs at our office. **Please call our office first for an appointment to serve the all the medical needs of your child including all well checkups, all shots, sports physicals, and acute illnesses like ear infections, sore throats and management of chronic problems.**

9) Next Check up: After discharge from Nursery, your infant needs to be seen as follows:

A) Three to four days of life: This visit is important to make sure baby is feeding well, not losing excessive weight, and not developing excessive jaundice. **Signs of certain medical conditions like late onset infections, feeding problems, and jaundice are not always clearly evident while the child is in nursery before discharge.**



Please call 706-232-1300 from hospital and make an appointment for this visit before going home.

B) The 2 Week Check Up is important to make sure baby has regained birth weight. Most new born babies lose 10 % of body weight after birth and are supposed to regain it back by 2 weeks of age. Sometimes symptoms of certain medical conditions appear for the first time around two weeks of age.

Welcome To Happy Parenthood!

For more parent companion hand outs on various topics please visit: www.DrMiniyar.com.