

GUIDE FOR PARENTS 2-4 WEEKS

INFANT CARE

Umbilicus Care Try to keep the cord dry. Put rubbing alcohol on the base of the cord (where it attaches to the skin) with each diaper change and after baths until one week after it falls off. Air exposure helps keep the cord dry and eventually fall off, so keep diapers folded down below the cord area.

Skin/Nail Care Bathe your baby daily in hot weather and every other day in cool weather. Keep water level below the navel or sponge bathe until cord has fallen off. Use tap water without any soap or with a non-drying soap like Dove. Don't forget to rinse the face. Never use soap to wash the inside of the female genital area. Rinse the area with plain water and wipe front to back to prevent irritation. When bathing your baby in the sink or tub, seat him or her on a washcloth or sponge to prevent slipping. Set the water heater to less than 120 degrees so the water won't scald the baby. Trim the nails once a week after a bath so the nails are soft. Using clippers or special baby scissors, cut the toenails straight across. Round the corners of the fingernails to reduce scratches.

Bowel Movements Baby's first few bowel movements are thick, dark-green or black. This is called passing meconium. Breast-fed babies stools soon resemble light mustard with seedlike particles and are soft and slightly runny. They may have a bowel movement after each feeding or only once a week. Formula-fed babies usually have tan or yellow stools that are the consistency of peanut butter. They should have at least one bowel movement a day. Occasional variation in the color and consistency of stools is normal. Hard or very dry stools are signs that baby may not be getting enough fluid. More than one stool per feeding or watery stools may lead to dehydration. Call your doctor if you think your child is constipated or has diarrhea.

INJURY AND ILLNESS PREVENTION

Car Restraints All 50 states have passed laws that require children to ride in approved child passenger safety seats. Use a rear-facing, federally approved, properly installed infant safety seat until your child is over 20 pounds and able to sit up by himself. Keep your child facing backward as long as possible, up to one year of age. The safest place for a child to be restrained in a car is in the middle of the back seat. DO NOT put a rear facing infant seat in the front seat of a car or truck with a passenger side air bag.

Crib Safety Your baby's crib should have 12 slats per side, and no more than 2 and 3/8 inches between the slats. No crossbars on sides. Dropside should not release too easily. Metal hardware should be smooth with no rough edges. Mattress should fit tightly with no more than two-fingers width between mattress and side of crib. If crib is painted, make sure it is lead-free paint. The top rail of the crib should be at least : the height of the child to keep the baby from falling out. Use bumper pads for the crib until the baby is able to stand up.

Sleeping Position In 1996, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended that all healthy infants be put to sleep on their backs (supine) to reduce the risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome). The prone or Atummy position is recommended when babies are awake to prevent any flattening of the back of the head.

Smoke-free Environment Passive smoke comes from two sources: Secondhand smoke, which is exhaled by the smoker, and Sidestream smoke, which rises from the end of a burning cigarette. Children exposed to passive smoke have more frequent and more severe respiratory tract infections than non-exposed children. Other problems made worse by

exposure to passive smoke include: pneumonia, cough, bronchitis, croup, laryngitis, wheezing, bronchiolitis, asthma, flu, ear infections, middle ear fluid and blockage, sore throats, eye irritation, and SIDS. If you smoke, QUIT. If you can't quit, NEVER SMOKE INSIDE YOUR HOME, NEVER SMOKE IN THE CAR, and NEVER LEAVE YOUR CHILD WITH SOMEONE WHO SMOKES.

EARLY SIGNS OF ILLNESS

Fever If your child has a rectal temperature greater than 100.4 degrees F. on two separate readings thirty minutes apart call **your doctor immediately**. Fever in these first few weeks can indicate an infection and babies this age can quickly become seriously ill.

Failure to eat Breast-fed babies who are refusing to nurse or formula-fed babies who are refusing the bottle may be in the early stages of an illness.

Vomiting Forceful vomiting (shooting out several inches rather than the normal spitting up) can be a sign of an obstruction between the stomach and the small intestine called pyloric stenosis. This should be evaluated by your baby's doctor. You should also inform your doctor about any vomiting that persists for more than 12 hours, or is associated with diarrhea and/or fever.

Diarrhea Watery stools are usually caused by a viral infection. The danger from diarrhea is the possibility of dehydration. If stools are watery or occur more often than 6-8 times per day, baby's mouth is dry, baby is not making tears, or there is a decrease in the number of wet diapers in a day call your doctor.

NUTRITION

Sufficient Weight Gain Your baby may lose 10-15% of his or her birth weight in the first week of life (less in formula-fed babies, more in breast-fed babies). Your baby should be back to birth weight by 2 weeks of age. At this time your baby should be gaining 2 to 1 ounce per day.

ORAL HEALTH

Clean baby's mouth with a soft cloth after each feeding.

Never put your baby to bed with a bottle. This can cause ear infections and when they get teeth can cause cavities.

Never prop bottle to feed infant.

PARENT-INFANT INTERACTION

Talk to your baby as much as possible.

Read to your baby as often as you can.

Sing to your baby.

Play soft music.

Cuddle, rock, and touch your baby often.

SAFETY

Never leave your baby unattended on any surface above the floor.

If you use baby powder shake it away from your baby's face so he or she won't inhale it.

Keep crib free of all small objects baby could swallow.

Never leave plastic bags or wrappings where baby can get them.

Dress your baby in flame retardant clothing and install smoke detectors in your home.

Never leave your baby alone in the house, yard, or car.

Don't attach pacifiers or other objects to crib with a cord.

Don't tie a string or put a necklace around your baby's neck.

Don't shake the baby's head too vigorously and always support the baby's head and neck.