

The complete step-by-step guide for first-time & experienced parents.

Subjects Covered Include:

- Lifting & Holding
- Breast Feeding
- Expressing Milk
- Bottle Feeding
- Diapering
- Cord Care
- Bathing
- Calming
- Colic
- Play
- Safety
- General Healthcare
- Temperature / Fever
- Medications
- Postpartum Care

1) **LIFTING & HOLDING**

As you handle your baby, you will find the safe and comfortable ways that work well for you and your baby.

In general, keep in mind:

An infant’s head is heavy compared to the rest of his body. His neck muscles aren’t yet strong enough to support his head. He doesn’t have good control over the movement or position of his body and depends on the person holding him to keep him secure. When you are lifting a baby, always support the head and neck. When you start, it’s best to use both hands to lift and carry. In time, you’ll feel more confident about holding the baby in one hand, in ways that provide the same good support.

Handing to another person

Continue to support the head and neck until the other person has replaced your hands.

2) **BREASTFEEDING**

Choose a position that is comfortable for you and your baby. Stroke the baby’s lips with your nipple to tell him to open his mouth.

Help the baby to latch on by putting your nipple and the areola into his wide open mouth.

If latching on hurts, something is not right, so try again.

To break the suction of your baby’s mouth on your breast, gently slip the tip of your finger into the corner of his mouth. Use both breasts at each feeding; alternate which one you start with.

Feed your baby “on demand” – about every 2 to 3 hours, for about 15 minutes on each breast.

Burp your baby between breasts – this helps with bubbles and it helps to wake up the baby if he is getting sleepy, so he will finish the feeding.

Breastfeeding concerns

To help increase your milk supply, feed the baby more often, get plenty of rest, and drink plenty of extra fluid.

If your breasts become too swollen with milk, become hard and painful, and your baby can’t nurse, you may be engorged. To relieve discomfort, apply warm compresses to your breasts or take a warm shower. Then massage your breasts towards nipple, express some milk then try nursing again. Between feedings, try a cold compress to reduce swelling.

Avoid the use of alcohol and drugs.

3) **EXPRESSING & STORING BREAST MILK**

Milk can be expressed with your hand or one of a variety of pumps available.

When pumping milk, be sure that your hands and any other items you might be using are clean.

Place milk in plastic bottles or plastic storage bags and label with baby’s name and the date.

Warm milk only by thawing or heating the container in warm water. DO NOT use the microwave.

Fresh milk can be stored for up to 72 hours in the refrigerator or up to 3 months in the freezer. Thawed milk can be stored in the refrigerator for 24 hours. Only use milk that has never been used as part of a feeding.

4) **BOTTLE FEEDING**

Use a specially designed infant formula to feed your baby. Do not substitute with cows milk.

Follow the instructions for making formula carefully. Improperly prepared formula can make your infant ill.

Prepare enough formula to be used in a 24 hour period.

Burp your baby after each ounce in the first weeks, then burp as needed. Some babies have “wet” burps, as they spit up a little each time.

5) **DIAPERING**

Clean the baby at each diaper change.

Clean in all the folds of the skin.

Girls

Always separate the labia, or lips of the vagina, and wipe from front to back with a clean part of the wash cloth with water only.

Boys

Clean under the scrotum or sack and between the scrotum and the penis.

If the baby is circumcised, just wash the end of the penis with a washcloth.

If the baby is uncircumcised, the foreskin must be cleaned also. As he grows, the foreskin will naturally loosen and as that happens, the skin under the foreskin should also be cleaned. The foreskin should be cleaned gently, never forced.

6) **CORD CARE**

Fold the diaper down under the cord so it is not covered.

The cord usually drops off by the end of a couple of weeks, but this varies from baby to baby.

Check with your healthcare provider for their most recent recommendations on how and how often to care for your baby’s cord.

7) **BATH TIME**

Giving the baby a bath can seem like a big job in the beginning. Take it easy and do what you can the first few times. Before long, bathing can become a chance for relaxation and fun.

When and where

Choose a convenient time for bathing the baby.

Daily bathing is not needed, usually two to three times a week is enough.

Use a small basin for the bath.

Avoid bathing the baby in the sink basin to prevent burns from the hot water faucet.

Early days

A sponge bath is usually suggested until the cord comes off. Only expose the body part you are washing and dry as you go to keep the baby from getting chilled.

Keeping safe

Bath water should be warm, but not hot.

Use your elbow to test the temperature.

Use only 2–3 inches of water in the early days.

A small towel, face cloth, or sponge pad in the basin helps prevent slipping.

Washing

Clean the baby’s eyes first, using a separate corner of the cloth for each eye.

Use plain water on the baby’s face.

Be sure to clean all skin folds and dry carefully to prevent chaffing.

Pay special attention to skin folds like the neck, elbows, knees, and groin area.

Don’t use Q-tips in the baby’s ears; use face cloth only.

Use a brush to clean the scalp – a soft bristle tooth brush works well.

Use a mild soap and shampoo.

Avoid lotions and powders unless recommended by your doctor or nurse.

Remember that bathing is a chance for relaxation and fun – enjoy this time with your baby when possible.

8) **CALMING**

When babies are fussy, helping them to calm down can be very challenging and tiring. You’ll learn the things that work with your baby. Here are some things to try.

Remember

All babies are fussy sometimes. Most babies have a regular “fussy” time – often late afternoon/early evening.

Crying is a way of communicating. When the baby cries, check to see:

Is the diaper soiled or wet?

Could the baby be hungry?

Is anything hurting the baby or making her uncomfortable?

Does the baby just want company?

Finding what works with your baby

Many babies are calmed by repeated motion (swinging, rocking, car ride) or repeating sound (heartbeat, ocean). Calming a baby is often the result of a combination of movement and sound.

Some babies are happiest in quiet, calm surroundings. These babies calm best with:

Quiet talking or singing.
Gentle movement or rocking.
Being held close to your body.
Being wrapped snugly.

Some babies like more activity or distraction in their surroundings. These babies calm best with:

Increased activity like dancing or swaying.
Music or sound.
Toys or other things to interest them.

9) COLIC

Colic is usually outgrown by about three months of age.

Babies who have colic may need special attention at feeding times:

Calm, peaceful environment.
Frequent burping.
Try holding or positioning the baby in ways which provide support to the stomach area.
Warmth often helps babies to relax; swaddling with a warm blanket or towel adds comfort and security.
Remember, nothing works all the time.

Give yourself a break

Sometimes no matter what you do the baby still cries. Leaving the baby safe in the crib with the side rails up, while you give yourself a brief break, is fair and helps you a lot. **Never shake the baby** as this may cause injury or even death.

10) PLAYTIME

Play does not need to be formal or follow a set of rules. It is a happy way of helping to explore the abilities the baby is naturally developing. Try to play and interact with the baby in ways that help him explore each new ability as he is ready. Think about what he is already able to do and what he is learning to do.

You don't need to rush this process, all babies are different. You can enjoy noticing the changes as your baby makes them.

Good times

You will learn to recognize when the baby is ready to respond to what you do. When the baby is bored or tired, begins to cry or look away, stop the activity. Before or after feedings are often good times for a newborn.

See, hear, touch

Parents help their babies by introducing them to the sights and sounds around them. Much of the stimulation that your baby receives comes as you do your daily activities together.

You can give the baby variations in sights and sounds by:

Changing his location in the room, placing different pictures in his crib, showing him interesting items as you use them. Talking and singing to him, letting him hear house hold sounds like vacuums, radios, and clocks.

Babies also like to feel different textures and shapes. They get enjoyment from the different linen and clothing you use and when you give them toys or safe household items which feel different.

Talk to the baby as you do things and give him lots of smiles and praise. Using real words will help him to be familiar with the sounds he will one day try to make.

On the move

As babies grow older, they begin to reach out and move toward things which interest them. You can encourage this by placing things which interest them within their reach. This might include things which are brightly colored, or make pleasant sounds.

11) SAFETY

Keep in mind:

A baby's ability to get into dangerous situations changes as he learns new ways to move.

Babies can't really use reason or figure out ways to help themselves when they might need to.

Prevent injury from falls

Never leave a baby on an unprotected surface - even newborns can move and fall off - always use side rails.

Always use safety straps in an infant seat, highchair, or car seat and don't forget the strap between the legs.

Crib safety

Crib slats must not be wider than 2 3/8" apart. The top crib rail to the mattress at its lowest level should be at least 22". Do not substitute loose plastic or plastic bags for mattress covers. Remove bumper pads when the child is able to pull up and climb onto them.

Sleeping

Always leave both side rails up. When your healthy baby is being put down for a nap or to bed for the night, put her on her back to sleep. Don't leave the baby asleep in a place like an adult's bed or a sofa. Surfaces that do not have sides or a side rail are not safe places to leave a sleeping baby.

Preventing strangling or choking

Don't tie ribbon or string around a child's neck to hold a pacifier. Keep cords (electrical, blinds, telephone) out of reach. Keep small, mouth-size items out of reach, such as peanuts, buttons, and pins.

When the baby is on the move

Imagine the baby's view of the world from floor level. Remove breakable items, etc., from low surfaces. Remove cords and cover electrical outlets. Store all cleaners, medicines, cosmetics, and other dangerous things in a place out of the baby's reach. Put safety locks on all cabinets and drawers. Consider putting a safety lock on your toilet lid. Use safety gates at the top and bottom of all stairways.

Choose toys carefully

Avoid small pieces which can be removed. Avoid sharp edges and toys which are easily broken.

Car safety

Always place the child in an approved car seat when traveling in the car. The center back seat is usually the safest place for your baby. Infants should be rear facing, toddlers forward facing.

Never put your baby in the front seat, especially if your car has airbags.

12) GENERAL HEALTHCARE

Immunizations

Immunizations are extremely important to keep your baby safe from some very serious diseases and need to be administered on schedule throughout childhood. Your practitioner will review these with you at the well baby appointments.

When to call your health care provider

Your instincts should help you realize when something is not right with your baby.

Call your health care provider if you notice:

Sudden and extreme fussiness.
Loss of appetite or changed sleep patterns.
A change in your baby's color or appearance.
Vomiting, rash, or fever.
Less than 6-8 wet diapers in a 24 hour period or a change in bowl movement.

13) CHECKING FOR FEVER

In the first three months, under the arm temperatures are safest.

Axillary temperatures

Must be taken between skin surfaces. Remove the baby's clothing and keep the thermometer under the arm, held close to the body for about 5 minutes. Normal is 97.6 degrees Fahrenheit or 36.4 degrees Centigrade.

14) GIVING MEDICINE

Never give medicine to an infant without first checking with your health care provider. Some medicines come with pre-measured droppers. Examples are fever medicine, vitamins, iron drops, and fluoride drops. Always be sure that you understand all directions before giving your baby medicine. Follow all directions carefully. Some medicines need to be refrigerated, shaken, kept out of the light, etc.

To help a baby take medicine

Elevate the baby's head slightly.

Squirt or drop medicine slowly into the side of the mouth about halfway back.

Swaddling or wrapping an infant can help while you give medication, especially if you are alone and the baby is moving around.

15) POSTPARTUM CARE

It is normal to feel overwhelmed at times - allow yourself to get all the rest and help you have available.

Lochia, the bleeding after delivery, will continue for about 10 days to 2 weeks. The color will change as the amount decreases, from red to brown to yellowish. Some "spotting" may continue until your checkup.

Minor problems with urination are not unusual. Doing Kegel exercises will help you to regain muscle strength.

Hemorrhoids are another common discomfort after childbirth. Use of over-the-counter preparations to treat hemorrhoids is a simple way to deal with this (witch hazel pads, suppositories, or creams). Eating a high fiber diet with lots of fluids will also help by preventing constipation which can further aggravate the situation.

Stitches in the perineum which are irritating can be helped with ice packs (to reduce swelling and numb area) and/or warm or cold sitz baths several times a day. These stitches will dissolve in 1 to 2 weeks.

Stitches or staples on the abdomen from a cesarean delivery will need to be removed by your health care provider. Observe your stitches daily looking for redness or drainage. These may be signs of infection and should be reported to your health care provider.

All new mothers, breastfeeding or bottle feeding, should wear a good supportive bra.

All new mothers should contact a health care provider if:

Temperature is greater than 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit.

Excessive bleeding occurs - saturating pads every 15 - 20 minutes.

Llochia has a foul odor.

Seek advice from your health care provider regarding the start of an exercise program, resuming intercourse, and the need for birth control. Remember that breastfeeding is NOT a form of birth control.

Being emotional and feeling "blue" for a few days after delivery is normal. If you are feeling unlike yourself emotionally for longer than one week, you should talk with your health care provider.

COMPLETE BABY CARE

RESOURCE GUIDE



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For a complete list of Educational programs,
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