

Caring for Your Newborn: Your First Weeks Guide

Maternal & Newborn · Newborn Assessment & Care

The first weeks with a new baby are busy. These steps keep your baby safe and help you spot problems early.

Sleep safe, every sleep

- Place your baby **alone, on the back, in a crib** with a firm, flat mattress and a fitted sheet.
- No pillows, bumpers, blankets, or toys in the crib.
- Keep the crib in your room. Do not sleep with your baby in your bed, on a sofa, or in a chair.
- Keep your home and car smoke-free.

Feed and count diapers

- Feed when your baby roots, sucks on hands, or smacks lips.
- Breastfed babies eat 8 to 12 times in 24 hours.
- By day 5, expect at least 6 wet diapers a day.

Care for the cord and skin

- Keep the cord dry. It falls off in 1 to 3 weeks.
- Give sponge baths until then. Test the water with your wrist. Never leave your baby alone in water.

Ride safe

- Use a rear-facing car seat in the back seat for every ride.

Never shake a baby

- All babies cry. If you feel upset, put your baby on the back in the crib, step away, and call someone.

Call your provider today if you have

- **A baby under 3 months with a temperature of 100.4 F (38 C) or higher: call right away, day or night, or go to the emergency room.**
- A baby with fewer than 6 wet diapers a day after day 5
- A baby with yellow skin spreading to the belly or legs
- A baby with a red, smelly, or oozing cord

Call 911 or your local emergency number if you have

- A baby with blue or gray lips or skin
- A baby who stops breathing for 20 seconds or longer
- A baby who is limp or very hard to wake
- A baby having a seizure

This handout supports, not replaces, advice from your own nurse or doctor.

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