

PARENT INFORMATION SHEET FOR NEWBORNS

Congratulations on becoming a parent (or becoming a parent AGAIN)!

VACCINES:

- * Hepatitis B – prevents Hepatitis B, a virus that causes severe liver infection and liver cancer. Most babies receive their first hepatitis B vaccine in the hospital. If not, it will be given in the first month of life. Side effects from the vaccine are rare.
- * Household members living with infants are strongly encouraged to receive the flu and whooping cough vaccines. Please contact your primary care provider.

SCREENING TESTS:

Most babies have a newborn screening test and hearing test done in the hospital. Ask your baby's provider if you have questions about the results.

DEVELOPMENT and PARENTING TIPS:

Speech/language:

- * Newborns will respond to noise.
- * It is normal for newborns to startle.
- * In the next few weeks, babies will learn familiar voices.

Physical ability:

- * Newborns cannot hold their heads up well and need to have their heads and necks supported.
- * Newborns will often hold your finger and have their hands in fists.
- * In the next few weeks, babies will start lifting their heads.

Social/play:

- * Babies love faces! Newborns can see your face well from about 6 to 12 inches away.
- * Over the next few weeks, babies will start to focus on faces, lights and other objects.
- * Babies prefer toys with a black and white pattern because babies can see these best.
- * Newborns love to be spoken to, held, cuddled and looked at face to face.

Behavior:

- * Newborns will sleep a lot! Most newborns will sleep more during the day and are awake more at night – this is normal and will slowly change as the baby gets older.

- * Newborns should always sleep on their backs. This reduces the risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome or crib death). It is recommended that young infants sleep in their own cribs or bassinets without fluffy bedding or pillows. (See **SAFETY**, below).

Parenting Tips:

- * Try to sleep when your baby sleeps.
- * Take help from family and friends.
- * Call your child's doctor or your doctor if you feel sad or overwhelmed for more than a few days.
- * Mothers who are breastfeeding should drink lots of fluids and continue taking prenatal vitamins.

FEEDING:

- * Babies will need breast milk or formula with iron until one year of age. Do not give water unless your doctor recommends it. Juice and tea are not needed at this age.
- * Do not leave a bottle propped in your baby's mouth unattended. This can cause choking and over-feeding.
- * Do not microwave stored breast milk or formula.
- * Check the temperature of breast milk or formula by pouring a few drops on your wrist.
- * When making formula, always follow the directions on the package.
- * If your baby is breastfeeding, wait until 1 month of age before using a pacifier.
- * Do not give your baby honey for the first year of life. Honey can cause botulism.
- * Breastfeeding babies must take extra vitamin D to prevent rickets (weak bones and other problems). Formula-fed babies also need extra vitamin D if not taking at least 32 ounces of formula each day. Your provider will prescribe this or tell you what product to buy, usually within the first month.

HYGIENE:

- * The umbilical cord usually falls off by 2 weeks of age. Until then, keep the cord dry. It is OK to clean off dried blood.
- * Sponge baths are best until the cord falls off and the area is dry.
- * Use plain water with or without a mild soap/shampoo for baths.
- * Keep nails short. Babies sometimes scratch their faces with their fingernails. Use emery boards or nail clippers to trim sharp nails.
- * Newborns do not need to be bundled too much. Usually 1 more layer of clothing than adults is fine. Many newborns like to be wrapped up in a thin blanket, called "swaddling."

DIAPER CARE:

- * At first, newborns have dark, sticky stools, which are called meconium.
- * Breast-fed babies have stools that are greenish brown in the first 2-5 days and then become yellow, loose and seedy.
- * Formula-fed babies have stools that are more solid and greenish.
- * Babies often strain and look uncomfortable when having a bowel movement. This is normal.
- * Constipation in young infants means that the stool is thick and hard to pass.
- * Desitin, Balmex, A+D Ointment, etc... may be helpful for diaper rashes.
- * Do not use powders.

SAFETY ISSUES:

- * Never leave newborns unattended or alone on a bed, couch, changing table or during a bath.
- * ALWAYS but your newborn baby to sleep on his/her back to reduce the risk of SIDS, or suffocation (crib death).
- * Newborns should sleep on a firm sleep surface. Avoid soft bedding, stuffed animals, pillows or any soft objects in the newborn's sleep area.
- * Never shake your baby.
- * Always use a car seat. Infants and toddlers should face the rear of the car until two years of age. The middle of the back seat is the safest location. Babies and young children should ALWAYS ride in the back seat.
- * Turn the temperature of your hot water heater to 120 degrees F or less.
- * Use a crib with slats 2 3/8 inches apart or less.
- * Find out if your home has lead paint or lead hazards. If you rent an apartment, your landlord should know and is required by law to disclose this information. Ask your child's doctor or nurse if you have questions about this.
- * No smoking in the house! We strongly encourage parents who smoke to try to quit. Even the smoke on your clothes, hair, and breath can affect your child. Ask us for information on how to quit.
- * Make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are working.
- * CPR training is recommended.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

- * Call right away if your newborn has a rectal temperature of 100.4 or higher.

NEXT VISIT: 2 weeks old for a weight check and as needed for other problems, illnesses, and injuries

Remember to write down questions and bring the list with you!

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

The internet can be an excellent source of information on child health and development. Be sure that the websites you visit are reputable! If you have questions, please ask us.

Need help with breastfeeding?

Meet with a lactation consultant and other breastfeeding mothers at the Cambridge Health Alliance Breastfeeding Support Drop-in Program, located at 8 Camelia Avenue in the Cambridge Hospital driveway. Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10AM to 12PM. No appointment is necessary!

More information is available from these sources:

Zipmilk	www.zipmilk.org
Massachusetts WIC Nutrition Program	(800) 942-1007
La Leche League	(800) LA LECHE
Nursing Mothers' Council	(617) 244-5102
Massachusetts Breastfeeding Coalition	www.massbfc.org
International Lactation Consultant Association	www.ilca.org
National Women's Health Information Center	(800) 994-9662

Check out *Bright Futures* parent information from the American Academy of Pediatrics at:

<http://brightfutures.aap.org/pdfs/Visit%20Forms%20by%20Age%20110/Newborn,%202-5%20Day/A.Inf.PH.2-5day.pdf>

Check out *Healthy Children* parent information from the American Academy of Pediatrics at:

www.healthychildren.org

Find more information and tools on our CHA website page for parent resources at:

[Http://www.challiance.org/Services/PediatricsResourcesforParents.aspx](http://www.challiance.org/Services/PediatricsResourcesforParents.aspx)

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