

# Well Child Care First Visit

## Your Baby's First Weeks



### **Adjusting to Your Baby**

Your baby:

- Needs several weeks to adjust to the outside world.
- May have no schedule or may be unpredictable for a few weeks.
- Will go through many changes.
- May be active at birth, quiet for a few days, then more active again.

You will:

- Be busy caring for your baby.
- Enjoy and learn about your new baby.
- Develop a relationship with and adjust to a new family member.
- Need to recover from the labor and delivery.
- Be tired, so rest whenever possible.

### **Understanding Your Baby**

- Get to know your baby. Babies are like snowflakes – no two are alike.
- Learn about your baby's personality. This can help you meet your baby's special needs.
- Your baby may be quiet, adjust easily, and let you know his needs. However, your baby may be difficult, unpredictable, irregular in feeding and sleeping, and hard to comfort.

### **What You Can Do**

All babies need warmth and love to help them grow. You cannot spoil your baby by holding him too much.

- Support your baby's head with the palm of your hand when you hold him.
- Hold him close so he can see your face.
- Pick him up, cuddle and love him.
- Show him things with bright contrasting colors.
- Talk and sing to him.

### **Feeding**

Your baby is growing! At this age, a baby only needs breast milk or infant formula. Most babies take 2 to 3 ounces of formula every 2 to 3 hours now. Breast-fed babies should usually feed about 10 minutes at each breast during each feeding. Breast-fed babies may want to nurse as often as every 2 hours. Babies often wake up at night to feed. This is normal. Cereal or baby food is not needed yet. Babies can have food allergies if solids are started too early. If your baby wants to feed more often, try a pacifier. Your baby may need to suck but not feed. Your show love to your baby when you hold your baby close in your arms with his head a little higher than the rest of his body during feeding.

## **Breast Feeding**

- Find a comfortable place for you and your baby.
- Hold your baby comfortably across your lap with the baby's entire body turned to face your body.
- Touch the baby's cheek or lower lip with your nipple to allow your baby to open his mouth then move him quickly to your breast.
- Allow your baby to grasp the darkly covered part of your breast with his mouth.
- When you are ready to stop nursing, break the suction by placing your finger in the corner of your baby's mouth.
- Feed at both breasts for 10-20 minutes per side every 2-3 hours. It is normal for your baby to nurse 8-12 times every 24 hours.

## **Mother's Concerns**

- Your breast only needs to be cleaned with plain water.
- Milk may leak from your breasts between feedings.
- Place a small, clean pad in your bra and change as needed to keep nipples dry.
- If your breasts become swollen or painful:
  - Let your baby nurse more often.
  - Try a warm towel or shower.
  - Try a hand to express some milk.
- Early signs of breast infection are a *tender red area* or *feeling like you have the flu*. Call your doctor immediately if you experience these.

## **Mixing Formula**

- Use a concentrated liquid formula if possible.
- Always mix 1 can of formula with 1 can of water.
- Keep the mixture in the refrigerator.
- If you use powdered formula, always mix 2 ounces of water per scoop of formula.

## **Bottle Feeding**

- Always wash your hands before preparing your baby's formula.
- Wash the bottles, caps, and nipples in clean water and dishwashing soap. Use a tube brush or dishwasher.
- Mix the formula according to the package directions.
- If you use water from a well, have it tested to make sure the water is safe. Call the University of Iowa Hygienic Laboratory at 319/335-4500 to have your water tested for bacteria and nitrates.
- Feed your baby when he is hungry, usually 3-4 hours apart during the day and 3-5 hours apart during the night. This should total about 6-8 times during a 24-hour period.
- You can feed on demand when he is gaining weight well.
- If your baby does not take all the formula, do not force him to drink it.
- Formula can be refrigerated and used again one time. Do not put fresh formula in the used bottle.
- Offer your baby about 3 ounces of formula at each feeding.
- When your baby empties the bottle 2 or 3 times a day, add another ounce to make 4 ounce bottles.

## **Burping**

- Burping helps remove air that is swallowed during feeding from your baby's stomach.
- Burp your baby half way through the feeding and again when your baby is finished.
- Place him over your shoulder, lay him across your lap on his tummy, or sit him up on your lap. Gently pat or rub his back.
- Most babies spit up some or even a lot after a feeding. This is not a problem, just messy.

## **Normal Development**

At two weeks old, your baby's five senses are improving everyday. Babies are learning to use their eyes and ears. Smiling faces and gentle, pleasant voices are interesting for babies at this age. Many mothers and fathers find that the baby brings a lot of new work. Help from friends and relatives is often very important at this time.

## **Movement**

- Movements gradually become smoother and more controlled.
- Lifts chin for a few seconds when lying on tummy.
- Cannot support head without assistance.
- Grasps whatever is placed in hand.

## **Vision and Hearing**

- May follow some moving objects with eyes.
- Explores surroundings with eyes.
- Turns in direction of some sounds.

## **What Your Baby May Be Doing**

- Holding his head up for a few minutes when he is on his tummy.
- Dropping head forward if he sits.
- Seeing best 7 to 9 inches away.
- Enjoying looking at faces and bright contrasting colors.
- Following movement of an object for a short distance.
- Hearing and being startled by too loud noises.
- Enjoying the sound of your voice.
- Being comforted when you talk to him.
- Feeling, tasting, and smelling things.
- Knowing the odor of his mother.

## **Crying**

- Crying is one way your baby communicates with you.
- In the early weeks, some babies may cry a total of 2 to 3 hours a day.
- Crying may increase during the first 6 to 8 weeks.
- Some babies may cry 10 to 15 minutes before they fall asleep.
- Babies develop different cries for different things.
- Respond quickly to your baby's cry so he learns to know you are there.
- At this early age, it is impossible to spoil a baby by responding to the crying.
- As your baby gets older, you do not need to feed him every time he cries. Try a pacifier, talking or singing to him, or walking around with him.

- You will learn through experience when to pick up and comfort your baby and when to feel confident that crying will stop in few minutes if left alone.
- NEVER SHAKE YOUR BABY! This can cause neck and head injury.
- If you have fed him and changed his diaper or picked him up and the crying continues, it is all right to put him in the crib for a while.
- Check on him every few minutes until he calms down.

### **Sleep**

Sleep patterns vary greatly among babies.

During the first month, expect your baby to:

- Sleep a total time of 15 to 18 hours a day.
- Be alert and content for about 30 minutes in a 4 hours period.
- Not know the difference between day and night
- Slowly develop a daily pattern of waking and sleeping.
- Eventually sleep 1 to 3 hour at a time during the day and 3 to 6 hours at a time during the night.
- Make a clear difference to baby between daytime and nighttime.  
Promote sleeping at night.
- Keep nighttime interactions brief, calm, and quiet as possible.
- Play with your baby and be more active to stimulate him during the day.
- If your baby is sleeping more during the day, wake him earlier and stimulate by undressing him or washing him with a cool cloth.

### **Reducing the Risk of SIDS**

- DO place them down for sleep only on their back until they are 1 year of age.
- DO put them on a firm mattress in a crib. If you do not have a crib place the baby on a clean, safe area on the floor to sleep.
- Do keep the baby's room cool when he is sleeping, overheating should be avoided. Infant should be lightly clothed for sleep and the bedroom temperature should be kept comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
- Do NOT bed share or co-sleep with you child. Sleep surfaces designed for adults may have additional risk of entrapment between the mattress and structure of bed, wall, or adjacent furniture.
- Do NOT put you infant to sleep on waterbeds, sofas, soft mattresses or other soft surfaces.
- Do NOT overdress your baby. Infants should be lightly clothed for sleep.
- DO NOT smoke around your baby or let anyone else smoke around your baby.
- DO NOT use pillow, crib bumper pads, blankets (especially adult blankets), or quilts over or under the baby.
- DO NOT place stuffed toys in infant's sleeping area.

### **Baths**

- Bathe your baby every 2 to 3 days.
- If your baby has dry skin bathe him less often.
- If he has oily skin, bathe him more often.
- Your baby's skin makes its own natural oil, so baby lotions, powders, or oils are not needed.
- Do not use talcum powder due to the chance of breathing 'in' powder.

- Use only water on your baby's face.
- Clean eyes by wiping from the inner corner out, using separate corners of the washcloth.
- Clean ears with a washcloth. Do not use Q-tips.
- Shampoo your baby's hair with each bath.
- Use a soft bristle baby brush, toothbrush, or combs to comb your baby's hair with every bath if your baby has cradle cap (a flaky coating that can develop on the scalp).

### **Cord Care**

- Clean your baby's cord thoroughly to prevent infection. The cord does not have any feeling so be sure to life UP the cord and clean all around it.
- Wipe the cord (especially at the base) with a warm water soaked Q-tip or cotton ball with every diaper change and routine bathing.
- Fold the diaper below the cord and secure it on either side to keep the cord clean and dry.

### **Bowel and Bladder**

Most babies will strain to pass bowel movements. As long as the bowel movement is soft, there is no need to worry. Ask you care provider about bowel movements that are hard, or if there is any constipation.

### **Diapering**

- Your baby should have 6 to 8 wet diapers a day.
- Your baby may have from 1 bowel movement a day to 1 with each feeding.
- Bowel movements will be lighter that the first few days: yellow-green, less sticky, and soft to runny.
- As long as the stool is not watery, you don't need to worry.
- Change diapers often and soon after a bowel movement to prevent diaper rash.
- If a rash occurs, clean bottom well with mild soap and water. Leave it open to air.
- Zinc oxide or similar products may be applied to diaper area if it becomes red.
- Clean your baby's bottom with every diaper change.

#### *Girls*

- Wipe front to back.
- A white vaginal discharge may be normal for the first few weeks.

#### *Circumcised boys*

- Apply white petroleum jelly to the tip of the penis with each diaper change for a week or until the site is healed. This prevents the diaper from sticking to the penis.
- Gently clean the penis daily with water.
- Use a mild soap if stool is present.
- A yellow white discharge normally forms and should not be wiped off.

#### *Circumcised boys*

- Wash and rinse daily.
- Do not retract the foreskin.

## **Clothing**

- Dress your baby according to what you would wear. If it is cool and you have on a sweater, make sure your baby is warm enough with a blanket or sweater.
- Overdressing or over wrapping your baby in blankets can cause overheating and fussiness.
- Feel the back of your baby's neck to see if he is too hot or too cold because your baby's hands and feet are usually cold.

## **Safety Tips**

### **Prevent Accidents, Falls, and Health Hazards**

- Your baby may be able to move or scoot already. Never leave your baby alone.
- Avoid falls – never leave your baby alone on any elevated surface such as a changing table or a sofa.
- If you must step away, put your baby in the crib or carry him with you.
- Never leave your baby alone with young brothers, sisters, or pets.
- Pick a safe location for your baby's crib. It should not be too near a heater. Make sure the sides are always completely up.
- Crib slats more than 2 and 3/8 inches apart can lead to injury.
- Protect your baby's skin and eyes from the sun by using a bonnet.
- Do not allow cigarette smoke near your baby. Second hand smoke can increase your baby's chances of having lung or ear infections.

### **Prevent Choking and Suffocation**

- Do not have pillows, large floppy toys, or plastic sheets in the crib.
- All parents should learn CPR so that you know what to do if your baby starts choking or stops breathing.
- Contact your local Red Cross or fire department for CPR lessons near you.

### **Car Safety**

An approved car seat is the safest way for babies to travel in cars. In fact, infant car seats are required by law.

- Infant car seats should be placed in a back seat with the infant facing backwards.
- When car seat is installed, make sure it does not move side to side or toward the front of the car.
- It is the law in Iowa that all children under age 3 must be in a car seat when riding in a car.
- Have a car seat that is easy to use and use it every time your baby is in the car.
- Make a family rule: everyone buckles up before the car moves.
- Use a semi-reclining car safety set and have it face the seat until your baby weighs 20 pounds and is 1 year of age.
- Make sure the car seat is anchored in the back seat of the car.
- Route the car's seat belt through the correct path of the baby seat (check instructions to be sure).
- Be sure to read the section on car seats in your car's owner's manual.
- Do not place rear-facing car seats in the front seats of cars with passenger-side airbags.
- Fasten the shoulder straps and seatbelt snugly around the baby.

- Pad the sides of the safety seat with rolled towels to prevent small babies from slouching.
- Never feed or let a fussy baby out of a safety seat while the car is moving.
- If your baby needs a break, or to be fed, stop the car and feed or calm him.
- Keep soft toys, rattles, or pacifiers on hand in case your baby gets fussy.
- Protect your baby from a hot safety seat by covering it with a cotton blanket or towel in warm weather.
- Protect your baby's skin and eyes from the sun by using car window shades.

### **Health Tips**

#### **Signs of Infection in an Infant**

These are signs of infection in an infant under 2 months of age. Since infections can be especially dangerous in a child this young, call your care provider right away if your child develops any of these symptoms:

- Poor feeding.
- Poor color.
- Listlessness.
- Weak cry.
- Axillary temperature of at least 37.6°C or 99.6°F.
- Breathing problems.
- Unusual fussiness.
- Sleeping more than usual.
- Vomiting or diarrhea.

#### **When Does Your Baby Have a Fever?**

A fever is a rise of body temperature to 37.6°C or 99.6°F axillary, or higher. It is a symptom, not a disease. It is the body's normal response to infections and plays a role in fighting them.

### **Next Visit**

Your baby's next appointment should be at the age of 2 months. At this time, your child will receive several immunizations.

#### **Additional Health Resources**

Virtual Children's Hospital – [www.vh.org/vch](http://www.vh.org/vch)

<http://kidshealth.org>

[www.generalpediatrics.com](http://www.generalpediatrics.com)

Credits:

American Academy of Pediatrics

Pediatric Behavioral Health Advisor

[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

Health Informatics – <http://uiowa.healthinformatics.net>