

## **Newborn Well Check**

### **Feeding**

- Infants should nurse or formula feed 8 to 10 or more times per day during the first several weeks of life. Feeding frequency will gradually reduce to 6 to 8 feeds over the next 4 months. After the first 3-4 days of life, your baby should make 6-8 wet diapers a day.
- Breastfed babies and formula fed babies who take less than 32 ounces per day should receive vitamin D, 400 units/day, given in the form of an over the counter supplement (such as D-Vi-Sol or Carlson Baby's Super Daily D3).
- Breastfeeding provides wonderful benefits for baby and mother, but can often be challenging in the beginning, especially for first time moms. If you are having trouble breastfeeding, be patient with yourself and seek help from our lactation consultant, Kellee Hays, who has appointments in our Fairfax and Herndon offices.
- Let baby's hunger cues guide your feeds. Your baby may start rooting, licking lips, or crying when ready for a feed. When finished with a feed your baby may start a lighter suck with frequent pauses if on the breast or turn head away if on the bottle. Your baby may seem very hungry in the first few weeks of life. As long as your baby is making good wet diapers and gaining weight appropriately, this is normal. If you have concerns about weight, we are happy to see your baby in the office for a weight check.

### **Sleep**

- Newborn babies generally sleep 16-17 hours/day, but their sleep cycles are short, often sleeping only 1-2 hours at a time. Babies often do not have regular sleep cycles until 6 months of age. Sleep for parents is hard to come by in the first few weeks to months. Have faith – it will get better with time!
- Always put baby on the back to sleep to avoid SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome). Make sure that your baby's sleep area is a firm surface free of fluffy pillows and loose blankets that may cover baby's airway during sleep. The safest place for your baby to sleep is in a separate area (crib or bassinet), but in the same room as parents for the first few months of life.
- Many babies have day-night reversal in the beginning. If your baby has this issue, try to make as much contrast between day and night. Turn on lights, take baby outside, and allow for activity and background noise during the day. Turn off lights and have a quiet peaceful environment during the night.

### **Soothing/Crying**

- Newborn babies cry for many reasons: hunger, discomfort, over-stimulation, and tiredness, just to name a few. Crying is baby's only way of communicating needs and releasing tension.
- Some methods for soothing your crying baby include: swaddling, holding baby and gently rocking or squatting, taking a walk with baby in a sling, carrier, or stroller, or turning on "white noise" such as a fan (mimics sounds in the womb). Over time you will become more in tune with the meaning of different types of cries and how to best soothe your baby.
- Baby's crying can often be stressful for parents. If you feel like your stress is getting out of hand, it is okay to put your crying baby in a safe place such as crib or bassinet and take a 10-15 minute break. Never shake your baby.

### **Bathing/Skin Care**

- Your newborn will only need baths a few times a week. Too much bathing can cause dryness of baby's delicate skin.
- Sponge baths are recommended until the umbilical stump falls off. After that you may do full baths with water and a gentle soap (Dove, Cetaphil, Basis). Never leave baby unattended, even for a moment, in the bath.
- If your baby has dry skin, you may use a gentle lotion (Aquaphor, Aveeno, Cetaphil, Eucerin) especially after bath to lock in moisture.
- If your baby has a diaper rash, you may use over-the-counter diaper cream to the area with each diaper change (Desitin,

A&D ointment, Triple Paste). You may also consider rinsing the soiled diaper area with warm water instead of using wipes and then gently patting dry with a washcloth or allowing to air dry for 10-15 minutes after.

### Development

- Your baby has many reflexes including a startle reflex where both arms will move out suddenly in response to a loud noise or sudden change. If your baby does not appear to respond to loud noises, let your pediatrician know.
- In the next month, your baby will start to focus on objects, especially faces 8-12 inches away. When baby looks at you, try moving your head from side to side to help baby practice tracking.
- Start tummy time from day 1. Tummy time is when an infant lays on the stomach while awake and supervised. Start with 3-5 minute sessions 2-3 times a day and work up to 40-60 minutes daily. This will help baby develop neck and upper body muscles and prevent flattening of the back of the head called positional plagiocephaly.

### Safety

- Rear-facing car seat: When in the car, your infant should be in a rear-facing car seat in the back seat. Car seat should be attached using manufacturer guidelines. Check with your local fire station or police station about free child seat inspections.
- Crib safety: Bars of the crib should be less than 2 3/8 inches (about the width of a playing card) apart. The space between the mattress and the crib frame should be less than two fingers wide. Make sure that your baby's sleep area is a firm surface free of fluffy pillows and loose blankets that may cover baby's airway during sleep.
- Be attentive: Never leave your baby unattended while awake. If you need to do something away from baby, place baby in a safe place such as a crib.
- Water temperature: Set home water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or below. Always test bath water before placing baby inside.
- Sun exposure: Avoid direct sunlight. Use protective clothing and hats to protect baby's skin.
- Smoke alarms: Install smoke alarms on every floor and change the batteries every 6 months

### Health Maintenance:

- Immunizations: Vaccinating your child is one of the most important things you can do to keep your child healthy. Your baby should have received the first Hepatitis B vaccine in the hospital. If not, we can give this vaccine at your newborn visit.
- Your pediatrician will tell you when to come in next. Your next well-child visit will be at 1 month old.
- Reasons to call us:
  - If your infant is less than 2 months old and has a fever, defined as rectal temperature 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or greater.
  - If your infant is having any feeding difficulties and making less than 6 wet diapers a day after day 5 of life.
  - If your infant appears to have difficulty breathing shown by grunting, retractions (sucking in of the skin above the collarbone, between ribs, and below ribs), or flaring of nostrils with each breath.
  - If your infant is lethargic, difficult to arouse, and not responsive to auditory or tactile stimuli.
  - If you have any questions or concerns about your infant. We are always here to help.

Care Plan:

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For more information see our website at [www.vapg.com](http://www.vapg.com) and the Healthy Children website from the American Academy of Pediatrics [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)