



# Caring for Your New Baby

## Nutrition

- Continue feeding with breast milk or formula only.
- No solids until 4-6 months of age.
- Many parents or grandparents will recommend putting rice cereal in the evening bottle to help the baby sleep. Unfortunately baby's stomachs are not developed enough to handle this yet. This practice has also been linked with increased caloric intake leading to childhood and adulthood obesity.
- Honey is not safe for children until after 1 year of age.
- Learn to recognize your baby's hunger signs and feed the baby on demand... not all cries are hunger.
- Do not put your baby to bed/sleep with a bottle, this is a choking hazard and is a habit that can lead to poor dental health.

## Elimination

- Your child should be having at least 6 wet diapers a day. If fewer than 6 call your doctor.
- Bowel movements are variable in newborns. The normal frequency and consistency vary depending on whether a baby is breastfed or what type of formula is being given. Normal frequency is anywhere from 7 times a day to once every seven days. It is normal for babies to seem uncomfortable with a bowel movement and they often grunt and cry with bowel movements.

## Sleep

- Newborns should be positioned on their back to sleep. This position is associated with a decreased risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Pillows and blankets in a crib can increase risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Blankets used to tightly swaddle a baby are acceptable at this age, but as your child grows covers have a way of becoming rearranged and tangled. Once this starts happening look for a product called a sleep sack (available at Wal-Mart, Toys R Us, Target). This is like a sleeping bag that you zip your baby into... basically a blanket that can not become positioned over the face.
- Newborns should sleep in their own crib or bassinette. This helps to reduce risk of harm to the infant. Believe it or not, this is also the easiest age at which to establish your bed as your own. As children get older, it will only become harder to move them into their own beds.

## Development/Behavior

- Spend plenty of time talking to, reading with, and playing with your infant. Although it may seem like your little one is sleeping the day away, your baby is tired from all the learning and growing.
- This is a critical time for language and IQ development so make sure to interact with and stimulate your little one.
- Be sure to take advantage of times when your little one is awake. Put a blanket on the floor and lay your baby down on the belly. This may initially be frustrating to an infant because it is more work to observe what's going on in the room but this is a great activity to help develop good head control.

## Umbilical Cord Care

- This can be a frightening thing for a new parent. Simply clean around the base of the stump of the umbilical cord several times a day. Do not scrub, and there is no need to apply alcohol or other agents. This usually falls off between 2 and 3 weeks of age. Think of it as a scab. If it comes off early, the skin might be a little bit irritated, feel free to use some vitamin A & D ointment if this is the case.



## Caring for Your Baby, *Continued*

### Safety

- Newborns should ride in a car seat, in the back seat, facing backwards. Please take your car by the State Police or Fire Station to inspect seat installation... 9 out of 10 seats are improperly installed.
- Do not leave a baby unattended where a fall could occur (changing table, bed, coffee table, etc.)
- Avoid toys or clothing articles with strings attached to them as these can become wrapped around the neck.
- Never shake a baby – no matter how frustrated, tired, and worn down you get... this can lead to brain injury that will make things much more frustrating and tiring.
- Do not leave the baby alone in the tub.

### Ways to prevent burn injuries:

- Make sure you have a smoke detector on each floor of the house. Change the batteries twice a year (easy to remember when you change the clocks for daylight savings time).
- Set the hot water heater to less than 120 degrees.
- Look for flame retardant clothing.
- Avoid excessive direct sun exposure.
- If there are guns in the home, make sure they are in a gun safe and also have a trigger lock. Studies show the safest way to prevent gun injury with children is to store them at a friend's house.

### Illness

- Call the doctor if you notice temperature over 100.4, seizure, rash, unusual irritability, lethargy, failure to eat, vomiting, diarrhea, dehydration, jaundice (yellowish skin), or breathing difficulty.
- Make a family decision to go smoke free. Second hand smoke exposure (even in houses where people smoke outside only) is associated with increased risk of our infant developing asthma, allergies, chronic ear infections, and hospitalization for respiratory illness like RSV or pneumonia. This is a wonderful sacrifice you can make for the health of your entire family. See your family doctor for help with smoking cessation.
- Tylenol Dose – This can be used for minor illnesses such as upper respiratory infection and pain from vaccinations. If your child has a temperature above 100.4 you should still call your physician's office.
- Tylenol Infant Drops – ½ dropper every 4 hours as needed.

**We have a nurse on call  
24 hours a day!**

United Health Professionals, Inc.  
304-697-2035