

# Bringing Baby Home

A Guide to Caring for Your Newborn





# Welcome Little One!



NAME | \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF BIRTH | \_\_\_\_\_

TIME OF BIRTH | \_\_\_\_\_

WEIGHT | \_\_\_\_\_

LENGTH | \_\_\_\_\_

HOSPITAL DOCTOR | \_\_\_\_\_

PEDIATRICIAN | \_\_\_\_\_

NOTES | \_\_\_\_\_

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Bringing home a new baby is exciting, but it can also be tiring and sometimes scary.

*We want you to know that we are here to answer your questions and give you information you need to keep your baby safe and healthy over these next few days and weeks.*

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# How Should I Feed My Baby?

Your baby should be fed at least:

**8–12 times in a 24-hour day**

By one of the following methods:



## Breastfeeding

10–15 minutes average  
per breast



## Formula

(or pumped breastmilk)  
1–2 ounces at a time

## General tips about feeding

- Feed your baby when they show signs of hunger (sticking tongue out, opening mouth) or at least every 2–3 hours for the first few weeks.
- Once babies are feeding well, they can sleep for up to 5 hours straight during a 24-hour period. Wake your baby if they feed less than 8 times in 24 hours.
- No water, juice, food, etc. until 6 months or doctor recommended.
- Ask your pediatrician about Vitamin D drops and how much to feed your baby as your baby grows.

# How Should I Feed My Baby?

## Hiccups & burping

All babies hiccup, no treatment is needed. All babies swallow air while being fed, especially if they feed quickly. In most cases, burping after feeding from each breast or every 2–3 ounces is enough. If your baby has problems, you may need to burp them every few minutes, or after every ounce. All babies spit up. Some babies spit up with every feed, some only occasionally. In the first 1–2 days babies often spit up mucous. This is normal after delivery.

## How do I know if my baby is eating enough?

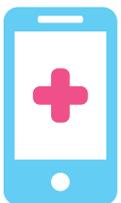
- Your baby should poop within their first 24 hours.
- By the number of wet diapers your baby has each day following birth.

- Your baby seems satisfied and happy for an average of 1–3 hours between feedings.

It is common through the first couple of nights for some babies to cluster feed and seem unsatisfied but continued latching will help.

- You should see or hear swallowing while your baby is feeding.
- If breastfeeding, your baby's stools should change to yellow and loose by day 4–5.

Day	# of Wet Diapers
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5+	6



## Call the Pediatrician if...

- » Your baby isn't making the minimum number of wet diapers
- » You are breastfeeding and milk has not come by the 4<sup>th</sup> day
- » Feedings are becoming more difficult
- » Your baby's spit up is green
- » You are worried about a tongue or lip tie

## What are the benefits of breastfeeding?

### Benefits for Baby

- Boosts the immune system
- Supplies nutrition
- Decreases risk of SIDS

### Benefits for Mom

- Helps heal from pregnancy and delivery
- Can burn up to 500 calories a day and help postpartum weight loss

## When will my milk come in?

- During pregnancy and days 0–5, the mother’s first milk is a thick, yellow milk called colostrum.
- Days 2–5 your new breast milk will “come in.” You can tell because the breasts will become larger and firmer, and the milk will become a creamier white and flow faster. You can hear your baby actively swallowing and sucking with feeds.
- Babies DO NOT need supplemental formula unless medically recommended by your doctor.
- **Latch every 2–3 hours** or as your baby shows signs of hunger, day or night (even if supplementing as directed by your doctor).
- Feeding on demand sends signals to your brain to increase the amount of milk you make.

## How do I breastfeed my baby?

1. Place your baby skin to skin. Pillows are very valuable for support.
2. Wait for a wide open mouth, and get as much of the areola (the dark colored area around the nipple) in the mouth as possible.
3. Alternate the breast you start on each time you feed your baby.  
(*Example: 8 am start with your right breast, 10 am start with your left breast.*)
4. Burp your baby as needed.

**For more information about breastfeeding:**

? Ask your nurse or doctor to talk to a lactation consultant.

👉 [globalhealthmedia.org/videos/breastfeeding-attachment](https://www.globalhealthmedia.org/videos/breastfeeding-attachment) or [womenshealth.gov](https://www.womenshealth.gov)

## What does latching look like?



## What positions help my baby breastfeed?



Clutch/Football position



Cradle position



Cross Cradle position



Side-lying position



Laid-back position

*Breastfeeding moms need to drink plenty of fluids to satisfy increased thirst.*



## Specific tips for bottle feeding

You can bottle feed your baby the following two ways:

### Pumped Breast Milk

You can pump your milk and give it by bottle. Contact your pediatrician or lactation consultant if you have questions.

### Powder, Liquid Concentrate, or Ready-to-Use Formula

Formula is available in several forms: powder, liquid concentrate, and ready-to-use.

- Use a formula with iron, any brand will work fine.
- Bottles should be fed at room temperature.

## How do I bottle feed my baby?

1. **Sterilize Bottle** | Before using new bottles for the first time, boil bottle, teat, and cap for 5 minutes or wash in a dishwasher. It is also a good idea to boil or dishwasher bottle pieces every once in a while, especially after your baby has been sick.
2. **Fill Bottle** | For powder and liquid concentrate, make sure the appropriate amount of water is in the bottle before adding the formula.
3. **Feed Baby** | Place baby skin to skin in a cradle position and hold the bottle so the nipple is always filled with formula.
4. **Burp Baby** | Burp your baby as needed.



## Caution!

**NEVER** microwave any bottles, formula, or breast milk. Uneven heating may burn your baby.

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## Freshly expressed breast milk storage guidelines

Storage Type	Time Length	Temperature
Room Temperature	4 hours optimal	66–78°F (19–26°C)
3 frozen ice packs in Cooler	24 hours	59°F (15°C)
Refrigerator	4 days optimal	39°F or lower (4°C)
Freezer	6–12 months	0–4°F (–18 – –20°C)
Thawed Breast Milk	Use within 24 hours	



*If your baby does not finish a fresh bottle of breast milk, it can be offered again the same day.*



## Activity Time!



### Skin to Skin Contact

Placing your baby on your chest has many benefits:

- Promotes bonding
- Maintains the baby's temperature
- Keeps baby's blood sugar from dropping low
- Relieves pain when babies need to have blood tests or other procedures done
- Encourages increased milk production in breastfeeding mothers
- Helps non-latching babies or those with a range of breastfeeding problems breastfeed more effectively



**Caution!** Do not fall asleep with your baby on your chest.

# Are My Baby's Diapers Normal?

## How often should my baby poop?

### After the first poop...

- Some babies poop after every feeding, some only once a day, and some a couple times a week. All can be normal.
- Many babies strain, grunt and even cry when they are pooping. This is normal as long as the stools are soft, your baby is not constipated.
- In the first 24 hours, babies need to poop at least once prior to going home.

## How will my baby's poop change?

Day	Description of Poop
0-3	Black, tar-like (Meconium)
1-4	Breastfed: green transitional stools Formula fed: varies from yellow to green to brown
4+	Breastfed: yellow, watery Formula fed: varies from yellow to green to brown



### Call the Pediatrician if...

- » Poop is white, gray, or red in color
- » Poop is hard or there is blood in the diaper

# How Do I Take My Baby's Temperature?

## Steps to taking my baby's temperature

### If concern for fever...

1. Clean the end of the digital thermometer with soap and water.
2. Put a small amount of lubricant like petroleum jelly (Vaseline®) on the tip.
3. Lay your child down across your lap or on a safe surface (like bed or changer). Remove diaper.
4. With one hand hold your child's legs gently up and with your other hand gently place the thermometer tip into the baby's anal opening.
5. Turn on the thermometer and hold until it beeps with a reading.



## Trust a Rectal Temperature

*Feeling a baby's forehead is not accurate. If you are concerned your baby has a fever, they need their temperature taken. You can trust a rectal temperature to be accurate and don't need to add/subtract a degree.*



## Caution!

**If greater than 100.4°F or lower than 97°F, take your baby to the Emergency Department immediately and call your pediatrician.**

# How and Where Should My Baby Sleep?



Here are helpful tips from Cradle Cincinnati to ensure safe sleep.

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## Can my baby sleep in bed with me?

**No. Alone** means without blankets, stuffed animals, positioners, bumpers, siblings, or parents. Lay your baby to sleep in a crib, bassinet, or portable crib next to your bed.

Sharing a room with your baby will make it easier for you to feed, comfort, and watch your baby.

## How should I lay my baby down to sleep?

Babies should be laid **on their back** for each and every sleep—nap time and nighttime included. Remind anyone else who takes care of your baby to do the same.

Some parents worry that babies will choke when on their backs, but your baby's airway anatomy and gag reflex will keep that from happening.

## Is it safe for my baby to sleep in a car seat, swing, stroller, etc?

**No.** If your baby falls asleep in an infant carrier, car seat, swing, stroller, bouncy seat, Rock 'n Play Sleeper, or other location, you should move them to a firm sleep surface (crib, bassinet or portable crib) as soon as possible.

**Empty cribs** should be used as your baby's primary sleeping place.

# How and Where Should My Baby Sleep?

Remember the **ABCs** of Safe Sleep!



Babies should sleep **alone**, on their **back**, in a **crib**—**night time, nap time, every time.**



For more information, visit [cradlecincinnati.org/safesleep](http://cradlecincinnati.org/safesleep)



If you do not have a crib, please call the **United Way Help Line** at **211.**

# How Do I Keep My Baby Safe?



*All babies cry, it is normal!  
Babies usually cry a total of  
1–4 hours a day.*

## Things to check if your baby is crying:

- **Hunger** | Has it been 2–3 hours since your baby ate? They could be hungry.
- **Diaper** | Does your baby have a wet or dirty diaper?
- **Temperature** | Feel your baby's hands and feet. If they're cold, add another layer of clothing.
- **Comfort** | Is a piece of clothing or diaper making your baby uncomfortable? Check to see if a hair is caught around a finger or toe.

## Five S techniques to calm your baby

There is often not a specific reason why babies cry, try the 5 S techniques to calm your baby:

- **Swinging** | Rock your baby in your arms as you sway side to side.
- **Swaddling** | Swaddle your baby in a sleep sack or thin blanket.
- **Side/Stomach** | Hold your baby on his side or stomach in your arms.
- **Shushing** | Make “shushing” sounds, sing, or provide other white noise.
- **Sucking** | Give your baby a pacifier or allow to breast feed.

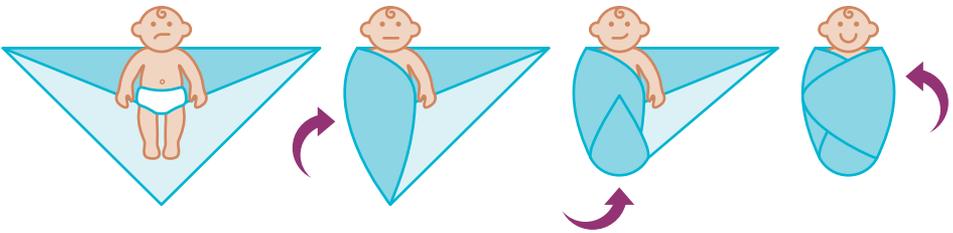


*Take a deep breath and stretch. Consoling your child is easier when you're relaxed.*

# How Do I Keep My Baby Safe?

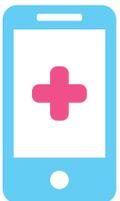
## How do I swaddle my baby?

- Sleep sacks are preferred to keep your sleeping baby warm.
- Only use a thin blanket when swaddling, thick blankets are a suffocation risk.
- Newborns like to have their arms tightly swaddled, and their legs loosely swaddled.
- At 2 months or signs of rolling, stop swaddling with arms in.



## If you're overwhelmed...

- Feeling frustrated, sad, down and overwhelmed is normal and common when bringing a newborn home.
- If you or another caregiver start to feel that you can't handle the situation, set the baby down in their crib and get help from another adult.
- No matter what, **NEVER SHAKE YOUR BABY.**
- If needed, place your baby in their crib for 5 minutes and walk away before trying to calm them again.



## Call the Pediatrician if...

- » Your baby keeps crying no matter what you do, he or she may be sick.

## Car seat requirements

- Installation can be checked at Cincinnati Children's or local Fire Department
- Located in rear seat, never in the front seat
- Appropriate for child's height and weight
- Rear-facing until at least 2 years old

📞 For assistance, call 513-803-RIDE (7433).

## How do I secure my baby in their car seat?

Straps should be coming out of the harness slots right at or below your baby's shoulders. Only use inserts that come with your car seat.

Straps should be tight enough that you cannot pinch any extra webbing.



Sit next to your newborn to watch them while they are young. Never leave your baby alone in a car.

The car seat should not move more than 1" side-to-side and should be properly installed.

## How does cigarette smoke affect my baby?

- Secondhand and even third-hand smoke can increase your baby's risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Smoking outside and using a designated "smoking jacket" for any smokers in the household can help decrease the risk of secondhand and even third-hand smoke.
- For more information and help, call the Tobacco Quit Line at 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

## What should I expect if my baby was exposed to drugs, (prescription or non-prescription), alcohol, or nicotine during pregnancy?

- For a variety of reasons, every baby responds differently. Babies can be fussy, have difficulty sleeping and eating, diarrhea, and more.
- Provide quiet places for rest, and be prepared to spend extra time consoling your infant.
- Let your baby's doctor know your concerns, and follow-up with specialty services if referred.



## Activity Time!



### Take Your Baby on a Walk

Walking outside gives your baby an opportunity to explore new sights, sounds, and smells. You might find that your baby sleeps much better after a walk, even if your baby was carried or pushed in a stroller.

Early morning walks provide an excellent source of Vitamin D from exposure to the sun, in as few as 15 minutes. Ensure that your baby is dressed in temperature appropriate attire.

# How Do I Take Care of My Baby's Skin?

## How should I clean my baby?

- Your nurse will help give your baby their first bath within the first 24 hours after birth.
- At home, you may give your baby sponge/washcloth baths until the umbilical cord falls off and the circumcision heals. Afterwards, a tub bath may be given. Bathe them with plain warm water, a mild soap like Dove®, or “baby” soap, always keeping their face above the water.
- Babies do not need baths every day, only a few times a week.
- Most babies do not need lotion or Vaseline® in the first few weeks. Ask your pediatrician if you have questions.

## What should my baby wear?

- You can dress your baby in the same weight and amount of clothing as you are wearing, plus a layer.
- A hat is recommended in cool weather. A sleep sack is the best option for your baby to sleep in.
- Never leave your newborn undressed for longer than a few minutes.

## How do I care for my baby's umbilical cord?

1. Keep your baby's umbilical cord dry and clean. If necessary, use a washcloth, gently wash and rinse with warm soapy water.
2. Try to keep the diaper from rubbing against the cord. Fold the diaper below the cord to improve air circulation.
3. It can take 1 to 3 weeks for the cord to fall off. It is normal to see a clear discharge or a small amount of bleeding as the cord is falling off.

# How Do I Take Care of My Baby's Skin?



*After a couple of days, the cord is a stiff, dry stump. The bulge of skin around the edge is a normal variant and does not represent an abnormality.*

*Photo by Janelle Aby, MD; Stanford Medicine, Newborn Nursery at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital*

## How do I care for my baby's circumcision?

1. Vaseline® over the area with each diaper change.
2. Using a washcloth, gently wash and rinse with warm soapy water with each bath.
3. Keep the diaper loose until the area is healed. It's not necessary to pull the foreskin back.

Day	Description of Circumcision Healing
1	Slight bleeding
2	Minor swelling and redness
7–10	Minor yellow film/drainage



### Call the Pediatrician if the Circumcision...

- » Has heavy bleeding after you're home from the hospital
- » Has swelling and redness for more than 2 days after circumcision
- » Has drainage with a lot of swelling and redness

## What if my baby has:

Symptom	Description
<b>Eye mucous</b>	This is common. Wipe this off gently with cotton balls or plain water. If the eyelids become red, swollen, or excessively matted, call your doctor.
<b>Enlarged breasts</b>	It is normal for both boy and girl babies to have enlarged breasts for the first several weeks, due to maternal hormones. Occasionally a white milky fluid may come from the nipples. If your baby's breasts are red, call your doctor.
<b>White bumps</b>	Commonly called milia, they often appear on newborn nose or chin. They resolve within days to weeks without any treatment.
<b>Red patches</b>	There are many common, harmless newborn rashes. Show your nurse, doctor, or pediatrician.
<b>Peeling skin</b>	Most baby's skin "peels" for several weeks after birth. This is normal and does not require lotion.
<b>Diaper rash</b>	Rinse the area frequently with water and expose the skin to air until completely dry. Small amounts of diaper creams may be used. If the skin or diaper area becomes very red, raw, blistered, or pimply, call your doctor.
<b>Vaginal discharge</b>	Girls can have a whitish mucous vaginal discharge that can sometimes be pink or bloody for several weeks. It is due to maternal hormones. It does not need to be removed.



## Erythema Toxicum

*This is the “rash” most commonly observed in the nursery. Bumps generally start on day 1 or 2 and increase in number over the next several days. It will go away on its own in about a week. Even newborns who have hundreds of spots are not symptomatic and need no further evaluation.*

*Photos by Janelle Aby, MD; Stanford Medicine, Newborn Nursery at Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital*



## Activity Time!



### Tummy Time

Babies need time on their tummies to develop strong neck muscles which will help your baby accomplish all of her physical milestones like sitting, crawling, and walking. Start with 3–5 minutes at a time on a hard surface, such as the floor when your baby is awake and alert. A good time to play with your child in this position is after a diaper change or nap.

# When Can I Bring My Baby Home?



## General Checklist

- Baby has their **first poop**, within the first 24 hours
- Have a **feeding plan** for home
- Have completed all **newborn screens**
- Have a **stable jaundice level** or a jaundice plan
- Make appointment** with baby's pediatrician within 2–5 days
- Discharged** by hospital pediatrician
- Appropriately sized and correctly installed **car seat**
- Safe sleeping** space

# When Can I Bring My Baby Home?

## Vaccines

Vaccines are safe. They prevent diseases and save lives of all ages! Ask your health provider if you have any questions.

### At the Hospital

The Hepatitis B vaccination is recommended at birth or within the first 24 hours of life. This vaccine is well-tolerated and safe. If mom has not had the flu or whooping cough shot she can get them at the hospital. These vaccines are all well-tolerated and safe.

### At the Pediatrician

Get the baby's vaccines on time at your baby's scheduled doctor's visits.

### At Home

Protect your baby from flu and whooping cough by making sure all adults and older children receive their flu and Tdap (pertussis or whooping cough) vaccines.

Flu and whooping cough vaccines cannot be given to newborns, but flu and whooping cough can cause new babies to be extremely ill and struggle to breathe.



## Activity Time!



### Read to Your Baby

Your baby won't understand your words, but hearing your voice stimulates an interest in sounds and helps him develop listening skills. Plus, no matter what your baby's age, reading together is a great opportunity for cuddling and bonding.

## What are the newborn screens?

### Hearing Screen to screen for hearing loss

- An earpiece is placed on each ear and records the baby's response. It is painless and takes only a few minutes.
- If your baby does not pass, you will be given a referral for a repeat test at Cincinnati Children's. If the test again shows hearing loss, the hearing professionals at Cincinnati Children's will help provide advice about options for your baby.

### Metabolic Screen to screen for common genetic conditions

- Your nurse will prick your baby's heel and place drops of blood on a test strip.
- Your pediatrician will receive the results within 5–14 days.

### Bilirubin Test to screen for jaundice

- A nurse will either use a sensor on your baby's forehead, chest, or from a drop of blood from their metabolic screen heel prick.
- If your baby has a high level either, a repeat blood test will be given in 12–24 hours to make sure the level is not too high. Or if the level is already particularly high, phototherapy—exposing your baby's skin to painless blue lights that break up the extra bilirubin—will be started.
- High levels of bilirubin cause yellowing of the skin and eyes.
- In extreme cases, very high levels can cause sleepiness and if not treated brain problems.

### Congenital Heart Screen to screen for heart defects

- A nurse will place two painless oxygen sensors on your baby's hand and leg.
- If your baby does not pass, they will be evaluated by the special care pediatrician and possibly referred to cardiology (heart doctors) at Cincinnati Children's.



## Activity Time!



### Show Your Baby His or Her Reflection

Looking in a mirror helps your baby learn how to focus, track images, and explore the wonderful things a face can do. Plus, it promotes social and emotional development as they interact with you (and maybe their siblings).

Introduce your baby to her beautiful face by pointing at her reflection. Touch her nose, stroke her hair, gently pinch her ears, and name each feature as you go. Sure, your newborn doesn't know what the words mean now, but she'll be delighted just the same!

# When Should I Call the Pediatrician?

## Feeding

- Your baby isn't making the minimum number of wet diapers
- Feedings are becoming more difficult
- Your baby's spit up is green

## Diaper

- Poop is white, gray, or red in color
- Poop is hard or there is blood in the diaper

## Calming

- If your baby keeps crying no matter what you do, they may be sick

## Circumcision

- Has heavy bleeding after you're home from the hospital
- Has swelling and redness for more than 2 days after circumcision
- Has drainage with a lot of swelling and redness

## Skin

- Eyelids become red, swollen, or excessively matted
- Breasts are red
- Skin or diaper area becomes very red, raw, blistered, or pimply
- Skin around the umbilical cord is red or has a lot of drainage

# When Should I Go Straight to the Emergency Department?



- My baby's **temperature is too high** and has a fever 100.4°F or higher (rectal temperature)
- My baby's **temperature is too low**—97°F or lower (rectal temperature)
- My baby's **lips appear blue**
- My baby is having **trouble breathing**
- My baby **won't wake up to feed**



Call your baby's Pediatrician on the way to the Emergency Department.

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# Resources

## Breastfeeding Support

Ask your lactation consultant at your birth hospital for specific information.

### General

Emergency Help .....	911
<i>(Police/Fire/Ambulance)</i>	
United Way Help Line .....	211
Car seat or Car seat Installation .....	513-803-RIDE (7433)

### Kentucky

Kentucky Department of Public Health .....	1-800-462-6122
Kentucky HANDS .....	502-564-3756
<i>(Health Access Nurturing Development Services)</i>	

### Indiana

Indiana State Department of Health .....	1-800-522-0874
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### Ohio

Butler County Health Department .....	513-863-1770
Butler County Well-Baby & Immunization Clinic .....	513-887-5253
Cincinnati Drug and Poison Control Center .....	513-636-5111
Cincinnati Health Department .....	513-357-7200
Cincinnati Children's Breastfeeding Medicine .....	513-636-2326
Clermont County Board of Health .....	513-732-7499
Hamilton County Department of Community Health Services .....	513-946-7802
Ohio Medicaid Consumer Hotline .....	1-800-324-8680
Ohio Help Me Grow & Healthy Ohioans .....	1-800-755-4769
Warren County Health Department .....	513-925-1228
Rape Crisis and Abuse Center of Hamilton County .....	513-872-9259

### Women, Infants and Children

Butler County WIC .....	513-896-7022
Clermont County WIC .....	513-732-7329
Hamilton County WIC .....	513-821-7012
Warren County WIC .....	513-925-1420

**Cincinnati Children's**  
3333 Burnet Avenue  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45229-3026

 [cincinnatichildrens.org](http://cincinnatichildrens.org)

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