



7 Questions About Your Newborn Baby's First Week

Bringing your little one home is exciting. No matter how well you've prepared, you're bound to be surprised as you learn about your new baby -- and new life.

The questions and answers below cover some of the basics of what you can expect in your baby's first week. With time, you, your partner, and your infant will get the hang of being a family.

1. How can I help my baby bond with me?

Bonding with your child is one of the great joys of parenthood, but it doesn't always happen right away. Not only are you recovering from giving birth, but your newborn is getting used to the being out in the world. Don't fret if things feel a little bumpy at first. Here's how to start the bonding process:

Spend time skin-to-skin. Both you and your partner should hold your infant close to your chest while feeding or just cuddling. You can also stroke or gently massage your little one.

- Talk baby talk. Coo, babble, sing, and talk to your newborn -- she loves the sound of your voice.
- Look in your baby's eyes and smile. In time, she'll start to mimic your expressions.

2. How much will my newborn sleep?

Your infant will sleep a lot at first -- as much as 16 hours a day. Unfortunately, it's only 1 to 2 hours at a time. The good news is that by 6 months, many babies sleep 6 hours a night.

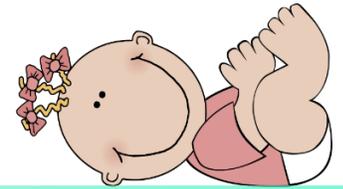
Try these tips to help your little one snooze:

- When your baby fusses at night, wait a minute or two to see if he calms himself down and goes back to sleep.
- Be quiet during nighttime feedings or diaper changes. Try not to wake him up too much.
- Be active and play during the day, so he stays awake for longer periods. That can gradually help him sleep more at night.

3. How often will my baby nurse or take a bottle, and how can I be sure she's getting enough?

Your infant should feed every 2 to 3 hours. You can tell that she's getting plenty to eat when:

- She spends 10 to 15 minutes at each breast, or she drinks 2 to 3 ounces of formula at each feeding.
- She has six or more wet diapers and two or more dirty diapers every 24 hours.
- After losing a little weight the first week, your baby starts to gain weight the second week. If you're concerned about your baby's weight, check with your pediatrician.



4. How often should I bathe my newborn?

Three baths a week or fewer are plenty. More often can dry out his skin. Wipe your baby clean with a sponge or wash cloth.

5. How should I care for my baby's belly button?

Keep the umbilical cord stump and the skin around it clean and dry until the stump shrivels and falls off.

- Give your baby sponge baths, and don't submerge the cord in water.
- Fold diapers below the cord to keep urine from soaking it.

Call the doctor if your baby cries when you touch the cord. She might have an infection. Redness at the base and foul-smelling, yellow liquid are also warning signs of infection.

6. How should I care for my baby's circumcision?

Your son's penis will be quite red for a few days. This should disappear within about a week. If it gets worse or you're worried, call your doctor.

- Keep your baby's penis clean, especially after a dirty diaper. Use just water, or a mild cleanser and water, as needed.
- Dab a little petroleum jelly on the tip to keep it from sticking to the diaper.



7. How can I keep my baby safe?

Always put your baby down to sleep on her back to minimize the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). The American Academy of Pediatrics also suggests that you:

- Empty her sleeping area. No pillows, crib bumpers, toys, or soft bedding like a blanket.
- Sleep in the same room as your infant -- but not in the same bed.
- Breastfeed your baby.
- Avoid devices sold to prevent SIDS, such as sleep positioners. Some can raise a baby's risk for SIDS or suffocation.
- Don't overdress your child. You want to prevent overheating.
- Take your baby for her shots (immunizations) on time, following CDC guidelines.
- Follow the doctor's orders on when to bring in your baby. Call right away if you have any

Mary Beth Cyliax, RN, CCM 314-652-8175 ext. 310