

Welcome Home, Baby!

Registering Your Baby with Your Health Insurance Plan

Register your baby with your health insurance plan as soon as you come home from the hospital.

- Call your insurance plan about your baby's coverage as soon as you come home.
- Some plans ask that you sign your baby up within 30 days after the baby is born. Make sure you know what your plan covers for your baby.

- Ask how well baby visits (talked about later) are covered.
- Ask how emergencies are covered.
- Ask if you need to choose a primary doctor for your baby.

Car Safety

It is exciting to bring the baby home.

- It is okay to be a little nervous; there is a lot to learn.
- Check to make sure you have most of the things you need for your baby.
- You should have a car seat that meets federal safety standards.
- Your baby must be safely buckled into the seat, and the seat must be buckled into the car.
- Install the car seat facing the rear of the car, in the back seat.
- Do not place the baby in the front seat if your car has a passenger-side air bag. Serious injuries and deaths have occurred when the airbag opened against the car seat.

Home Safety

Your baby will spend a lot of time in a crib.

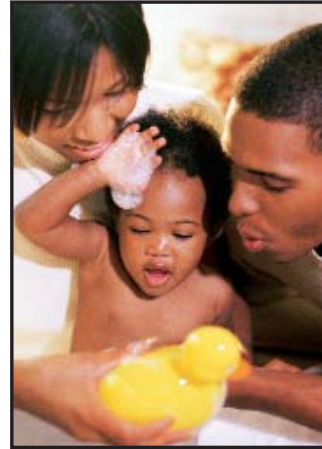
- The crib mattress should be at least 5 inches deep and fit close to the rails of the crib.
- The crib slats should be no more than $2\frac{3}{8}$ inches apart to prevent possible choking. Keep all cords, strings, straps, and wires out of the baby's reach.

You must be alert to prevent accidental falls.

- Do not put your baby's car seat carrier near the edge of a table, bed, or counter.
- Do not leave it unattended on a high surface.

At first you will give your baby sponge baths.

- When the baby's umbilical cord falls off, you can bathe your baby.
 - You can wash the baby in a clean sink or in a baby tub.
 - You do not need a lot of water, just about 2 inches.
 - Use warm water with a temperature of no more than 100° F.
 - Test the water by putting your elbow in it.
 - The water should feel the same as your skin.



NEVER LEAVE YOUR BABY ALONE IN THE TUB.

Umbilical Cord Care



After the birth of your baby, the umbilical cord will be clamped and cut off leaving a stump that will dry up and fall off, usually within 2 weeks.

- When the cord falls off, there will be a small, red, raw-looking spot that is the baby's navel.
- After the stump falls off, you may notice a small amount of fluid (sometimes tinged with blood) seeping from the navel area.
 - This is normal.
 - The navel will heal completely within 2 weeks if you take care of it.
- The most important thing to remember is to keep the cord/navel area clean, dry, and uncovered to promote healing and avoid infection.
- Ask your doctor before using alcohol or any other cleaning agent to clean the cord area on your baby.

Tips to Ensure Good Cord Care

- Keep the area clean and dry.
 - Give your baby sponge baths until the cord falls off to keep this area from getting wet.
- Keep the cord area open to air and light.
 - This will help with drying and healing.
- Fold the diaper down in front.
 - This will allow the cord area to stay exposed to air and will prevent dirty diaper contents from soiling the tender skin around this area on your baby.
- Clean the base of the stump at each diaper change.
 - Dampen a cotton ball or swab with warm water and gently clean around the base of your baby’s umbilical cord stump and the surrounding skin.
 - Gently pat the area dry with a soft cloth.

While the navel area is healing, it is normal to see small amounts of discharge or dried blood. Call your doctor right away if you see any of the following symptoms:

Your baby has a sudden fever.
Your baby has redness or swelling around the stump area.
The stump area continues to bleed.
The stump area on your baby oozes yellowish, foul-smelling discharge.

Circumcision and Penis Care

Circumcision is the removal of the foreskin on the end of the baby boy’s penis.

- There is no medical reason for circumcision to be done.
- Sometimes parents may have religious, family, or personal reasons for circumcision.
- It is usually done soon after the birth if a decision is made to do it.
- If your baby is not circumcised, do not push his foreskin back until you have checked with the baby’s doctor.
- If your baby has been circumcised, gently clean the outside skin of the penis by squeezing plain, warm water from a washcloth on it with each diaper change.
- Do not use baby wipes until it has healed.

Call your baby's doctor if any of the following occurs:

- The tip of the penis stays red with a yellow liquid coming from around the end for more than 1 week.
- There is bleeding or a foul smelling discharge, swelling, or more redness.
- The baby does not urinate.
- The baby has a fever.


Getting to Know Your New Baby

Your new baby will love attention.

- Hold your baby close and cuddle often.
- Your baby will learn to know your face and voice.
- Babies will cry to let you know:
 - When they are hungry.
 - When they are tired.
 - When it is too warm or too cold.
 - When they need a diaper change.
 - When they are ill.

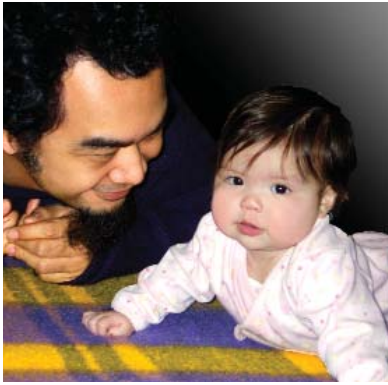


Sometimes, babies are just fussy and cry even when you have met all their needs. If nothing seems to help and your baby keeps crying, take deep breaths until you relax. Try following these tips to help calm your baby:

	Lay the baby on your chest so he can hear your heartbeat.
	Play soft music from a radio, CD, or tapes.
	Talk or sing to him in a soothing voice.
	Give him a pacifier or his thumb.
	Carry the baby and move slowly from room to room.
	Take your baby for a walk in a stroller or for a drive in your car.

Tummy Time!

- Tummy time is for babies who are awake.
- You must be watching your baby.
- After you bring your baby home and it is awake, place the baby on its tummy for short periods of time.



- Play with your baby 2 to 3 times each day.
- After a nap or diaper change is a good time to play.
- Give your baby more playtime, little by little.
- You can place the baby on the floor.
- Lie down next to your baby.
- You can lie on your back and place the baby on your chest.
- You can sit with the baby's chest on your leg.

- At first some babies don't like being on their tummy.
- Try putting a rolled-up towel or small pillow under the baby's chest.
- Place toys (and yourself) just out of the baby's reach.
- This will make them to stretch and move in different directions.

- These exercises make:
 - The baby's back, neck, and arms stronger.
 - Develop early hand-eye coordination.
 - Help baby to look at the surroundings.
 - Help with things needed to learn to scoot, crawl, and walk.

References: Willinger M, Ko CW, Hoffman HJ, et al. Trends in Infant Bed-Sharing in the United States, 1993-2000. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med.* 2003;157:43-49.

Sheers NJ, Rutherford GW, Kemp JS. *Where Should Infants Sleep? A Comparison of Risk for Sleeping in Cribs, Beds, and Other Sleeping Locations.* Abstract 7th International SIDS Conference., Florence, Italy, Sept. 2002.

Photo courtesy of the Back to Sleep campaign, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, NIH, DHHS.

Child Abuse

Taking care of a baby is hard work.

- Sometimes you may feel like you are losing control.
- You may feel like hitting or shaking your baby.
- Do not hit or shake your baby.
 - Hitting or shaking your baby can cause brain damage, blindness, other injuries, and even death.



NEVER shake or hit your baby. Do not handle your baby when you are angry.

- Stay calm if nothing is working.
- Crying will not hurt your baby.
- **It is never okay to hit, shake, or hurt your baby.**

If you are overwhelmed or feel like you might hurt your baby, take these steps:

- Put your baby down for a few minutes and try to relax.
 - Do not go so far away that you cannot hear your baby.
 - Take some deep breaths; listen to music for a short time.
 - Call a family member or a friend for help and support.
 - Run the vacuum cleaner; the noise may calm the baby.
 - Do not pick your baby up until you are calm.
 - If you cannot calm your baby and his crying continues for a long time, call your doctor.
 - Ask your doctor to refer you to a counselor for help.



Well-Baby Checkups

You must have your baby checked by the baby's doctor.

- The doctor will tell you how the baby is growing and how it is doing.
 - The doctor will tell you how to take care of your baby's health and prevent accidents.
- You can ask questions about your baby and tell the doctor if you have any concerns.
 - Schedule the baby's 1st visit to the doctor when the baby is about 2 to 4 weeks of age.
 - The doctor will talk to you about your pregnancy and the baby's birth.
 - The doctor will take your baby's temperature, weigh it, and measure its length and around his head.
 - The doctor will ask how your baby is doing with feeding and sleeping.
 - The doctor will ask about the baby's behavior.
 - The doctor will ask how many wet and dirty diapers there are every day.
 - Ask the doctor when you should call if you see signs that your baby may be ill.

The doctor will examine your baby at every visit.

- Visits are usually done when the baby is 1 month old, 2 months old, 4 months old, 6 months old, 12 months old, 15 months old, 18 months old, and 24 months old.
- At some visits, your baby will begin to get shots.
- You must keep these shots current to keep your baby healthy.
- These shots guard against many dangerous childhood diseases.
- Some of the diseases the shots protect against are:
 - Hepatitis B
 - Polio
 - Measles
 - Mumps
 - Rubella (German measles)
 - Pertussis (whooping cough)
 - Diphtheria
 - Tetanus (lockjaw)
 - Haemophilus influenzae type B
 - Pneumococcal infections
 - Chickenpox
- All of these shots must be given before your baby is 2 years old.
- Ask your doctor if you have any questions about your baby's shots.
- Do not be afraid to ask questions.
- You have just gone through an amazing journey with your pregnancy and the birth of your baby.
- Now you are beginning another journey!
- You cannot imagine all of the wonderful things ahead for your family.
- You and your partner have now begun a new relationship with a special person that will last a lifetime.

**Congratulations!
Good luck!
Best wishes for a
HAPPY LIFE!**