



Getting to Know Your New Baby

Congratulations on the birth of your baby! This handout is about what to expect from your baby during the first month of life.

Feeding your baby

- Your baby's tummy is very small and fills up fast. Baby needs to eat small amounts often, day and night.
- Breastfed babies usually nurse every 1½ to 3 hours. Some babies want to nurse more often.
- Formula fed babies need a bottle every 1½ to 3 hours. Feed baby more often if baby is hungry.
- Burp baby during and after feeding.
- Baby is probably eating enough if he or she has 6 to 8 wet diapers and at least 2 dirty diapers through the day and night.



Weight gain

- All babies lose a little weight right after birth. They should gain it back by the time they are about 10 days old.
- Babies have growth spurts at about 7 to 10 days old, and again at 3 to 6 weeks. Baby will be hungrier at these times.
- Baby will gain about ½ to 1 ounce per day, and grow 1 to 1½ inches by the time he or she is one month old.

Seeing and hearing

- When your baby is awake she will mostly want to eat. Baby will start responding to sounds and things she sees in the next few weeks.
- Baby can see only about 8 to 12 inches away. What she sees best is your face.
- Baby hears well and begins to recognize your voice.



Sleeping (and not sleeping!)

- Most babies should sleep on their backs. This is safest.
- Your newborn may sleep as much as 16 hours (or more) every day. When she's sleeping during the day, try to get some rest.
- Baby will not sleep through the night yet. Keep night feedings calm and quiet so she goes back to sleep easier.
- Baby will gradually learn night from day, and will sleep through the night when she is older.



Crying is normal

- Newborns may cry 1 to 4 hours a day. Answer baby's cry quickly, so he learns to trust you. Then when he's older he won't cry as much. You can't spoil him!
- Your baby cries when he needs something. Check his diaper, and see if he's hungry. Maybe he's too warm or too cold. Or maybe he just wants to be held.
- Sometimes a cry means "leave me alone". It's how baby gets rid of extra energy. You may have to let baby cry himself out until he can relax and fall asleep.
- Sometimes you can't stop the crying. It's OK – you're not a miracle worker, and you're not a bad parent. Ask family or friends to help give you a break.

Safety

- Never, never shake a baby! This can hurt baby's brain.
- Don't put pillows, comforters, or stuffed toys in the crib. They can cover baby's mouth and nose so she can't breathe.
- Don't smoke near baby. Anyone who smokes needs to go outside, and wash their hands before holding baby.
- Put baby in an infant car seat at all times in the car. Baby needs to face the rear of the car, and be in the back seat.

