THE MIDWIFE

EDUCATE EMPOWER SUPPORT

Newborn Care 101

A Simple Guide for the First Weeks at Home



EVERYDAY CARE, SAFETY, AND WHAT'S NORMAL FOR YOUR NEWBORN

FEEDING

- Breast milk or formula is all your baby needs (about 8–12 feedings/24 hrs).

Signs of a Good Feed:

- Rhythmic sucking and audible swallowing.
- Baby appears relaxed and satisfied after feeding.
- At least 6 wet diapers daily by day 5.
- Appropriate weight gain after the initial newborn weight loss.

DIAPER CARE

- Expect 6+ wet diapers per day (after day 5).
- Stools may be soft, seedy, and yellow (especially with breast milk).
- Change diapers often to keep the skin clean and dry.
- Use a diaper rash cream if needed.

SLEEP

- Newborns sleep about 14–17 hours per day (in short stretches).
- Always place baby on their back to sleep.
- Use a firm, flat sleep surface (crib, bassinet, or play yard).
- Keep the sleep area free of pillows, blankets, and toys.

BATHING

- A sponge bath is best until the umbilical cord falls off (usually 1–3 weeks).
- Then bathe 2–3 times per week.
- Use a mild, fragrance-free cleanser and warm water.
- Keep bath time short, warm, and calm.

UMBILICAL CORD CARE

- Keep the cord clean and dry.
- Let it air out (fold the diaper below the cord).
- It usually falls off within 1–3 weeks.
- Call your pediatrician if you notice redness, swelling, drainage, or a foul odor.

TEMPERATURE & COMFORT

- Keep baby warm and comfortable (1 more layer than you wear).
- A normal temperature is 97.7°F – 99.5°F (36.5°C – 37.5°C).
- Avoid overheating (no hats indoors).

BONDING & DEVELOPMENT

- Lots of skin-to-skin contact builds comfort, trust, and a strong bond.
- Talk, sing, read, and make eye contact with your baby.
- Tummy time (a few minutes while awake and supervised) helps build strength and motor skills.

COMMON NEWBORN CHANGES (WHAT TO EXPECT)

- A small weight loss (up to 10%) in the first few days is normal.
- Peeling or dry skin (common and temporary).
- Sneezing (helps clear their nose).
- Hiccups (may happen often).

CALL YOUR PEDIATRICIAN IF YOUR BABY...

- Has a fever of ≥100.4°F (38°C).
- Is not feeding well or has fewer than 6 wet diapers per day (after day 5).
- Has repeated vomiting (not just spit-up).
- Seems unusually sleepy or hard to wake.
- Has trouble breathing (fast, labored, or grunting).
- You notice redness, swelling, or drainage from the cord.
- **Has yellowing of the skin or eyes (jaundice).**

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