

Two to Four Week Check

Congratulations on the arrival of your new little one!!

FUN FACTS:

Babies usually lose weight after birth, but return to their birth weight by 10-14 days of age.

Babies double their birth weight by 5-6 months of age and triple it by 12 months.

The anterior fontanel or soft spot closes by 8 -15 months, and the posterior fontanel closes by 2-4 months.

Your baby can see about one foot ahead and loves to look at faces!!

FEEDING:

Your baby will obtain all the nutrients needed for proper growth from either breast milk or formula for the first 4-6 months. It is not necessary to give water or juices. If the weather is extremely hot and water is given, do not exceed 4 ounces per day. Babies do not sleep throughout the night until 8-12 weeks of age, therefore, resist the pressure from otherwise well-meaning relatives to give cereal to improve sleeping. This has never been proven to work and it may cause problems with allergies.

BREAST-FED BABIES

Babies feed on demand every 2-4 hours. If your baby requires feedings more often, please discuss this with us during your clinic visit. Most babies will feed for 10-20 minutes per breast, but since 80-90% of the breast is emptied in the first 4 minutes, do not worry if your baby feeds for shorter periods. You can feel comfortable that your baby is getting enough nutrition if he is gaining weight, is alert, and is wetting 6-8 diapers per day. If you experience any problems with nursing (pain, cracked nipples, frustration, etc.), please call.

Breast-fed babies tend to eat more frequently than bottle-fed babies. Once breastfeeding is well established some infants may not stool every day. As long as the stools are soft or liquid, do not be alarmed.

You will need to continue taking your prenatal vitamins while you breastfeed to provide your baby with iron. If you are unable to take them, please let us know so we can add iron supplementation to your baby's diet. The breast-fed baby will need Vitamin D supplements as well.

BOTTLE-FED BABIES

Always use formula with iron. Your baby's body is growing very quickly – so the additional iron is needed to make additional healthy red blood cells and prevent anemia.

Babies feed on demand every 3-4 hours. Formula can be given at room temperature or slightly warmed. Do not warm bottles in the microwave oven. It is difficult to get even heating and hot spots can burn your baby. Warming can be done in a warm water bath.

There is no need to sterilize bottles and nipples. Hot soapy water is fine for cleaning. All babies spit up to some degree; as long as your baby is alert, gaining weight and wetting 6-8 diapers per day, spitting up is considered a normal behavior.

ELIMINATION:

It is normal for babies to pull up their legs, turn red in the face and seem uncomfortable during a bowel movement. Your baby may even grunt; this is also a normal behavior. The act of feeding stimulates a bowel movement. Therefore, you can expect many diaper changes per day, often after every feeding. Constipation is the passage of hard stools, whether once per day or once every few days. Normal stool patterns may vary from several per day to once every few days. This does not represent constipation as long as the stool comes out soft or runny.

Never give laxatives, suppositories or enemas unless your child is seen by her physician first. Please call if you have any questions about your babies stooling pattern.

CORD CARE:

The umbilical cord stump should be gently cleaned with rubbing alcohol on a cotton ball or swab once per day or when it gets soiled. Try to keep it exposed to the air. No submersion baths should be given until the cord has fallen off, which is usually at 2-3 weeks of age. It is normal to see some oozing or bleeding as the cord separates. If there is a large amount of yellow drainage, it is foul-smelling or the area is red, please call the office immediately.

BATHING:

After the cord has fallen off, your baby can have a tub bath. NEVER leave your baby unattended in the tub, not even to answer the phone. Have everything prepared before you get started. Always use warm water and mild soaps. Do not be afraid to wash the head over the soft spot; you can not harm it with routine bathing.

DIAPER CARE:

Remember to wash your baby's diaper area with warm water (no soap) or a disposal baby wipe (without alcohol) at each diaper change. If possible, allow the skin to air dry before putting the diaper back on. If your baby does not have a rash it is not necessary to use diaper crème or powder with each change. Do not use baby powder containing talc. These products might cause the baby to have breathing problems.

Boys: Whether or not your son is circumcised, you may retract the skin/foreskin gently as far as it will go to clean the penis. Never forcefully retract the skin. The whitish discharge you may see - smegma - is a normal glandular discharge. In uncircumcised boys, the foreskin may not be completely retractable until 4-5 years of age, so do not worry.

Girls: Always wipe from front to back. After a bowel movement, be sure to spread the lips of the vagina and clean the stool out of this area. Your child may have a slightly whitish or bloody vaginal discharge in the first weeks of life due to circulating maternal hormones; do not be alarmed. Use of a cotton ball and warm water helps to gently clean this area.

SLEEP:

It is important for your infant to get used to sleeping in his own crib or bassinet. Believe it or not the position that your baby sleeps in may change the risk for sudden infant death syndrome or crib death. The safest position for your infant to sleep is on his back. So...place your infant "Back to Sleep" and help him learn to sleep safe!

DEVELOPMENT:

The first months with a new baby may be difficult and stressful at times. It may seem that all she does is eat, sleep, cry and want her diaper changed. However, this is a critical time for you to bond with your baby. The more you respond to her needs and desires, the more she learns to trust her parents and environment. Hold, cuddle, rock and talk to your baby as often as possible; do not worry about spoiling your baby at this age. By 8-12 weeks of age, she will settle into a more predictable eating and sleeping pattern.

COLIC: A lot of babies have a fussy period in the evenings which begins around 2-3 weeks of age and lasts until 2-3 months of age. This normal crying period is called colic and can be frustrating to parents who do not expect it. If your baby has been fed, burped and changed, and is still fussing he may just be tired. Sometimes a ride in a stroller, swing or snugly will calm him down. If your baby has a sudden change in mood and is difficult to console...call for an appointment to be sure there is no source for pain. Once determined that there is nothing medically wrong, you may just have to let him cry it out at times. This will not harm your baby. Do not feel guilty or inadequate just because your baby is having a bad day.

IMMUNIZATIONS:

Your baby may receive the Hepatitis B vaccine if not already given at the hospital. Always keep a copy of your child's shot record with you!

SAFETY:

1. Car seats -- ALWAYS secure your baby in an approved car safety restraint seat. If your baby is less than 20 lbs and less than a year of age, he should face backwards, preferably in the back seat. Never leave your baby alone in the car!!
2. Bathtub -- NEVER leave your baby unattended in the tub. Babies can drown in as little as one inch of water. Use warm water; babies scald easily in hot water. Do you know the temperature of the water in your hot water heater? It should not be hotter than 120 degrees to help prevent scalding.
4. Falls -- Although babies do not usually roll over until 4 months of age, they may scoot or accidentally roll over if left unattended on a bed, couch or changing table. Always have a hand on your baby.
5. Fire protection -- Make sure your house is equipped with both smoke alarms and a fire extinguisher.
6. Second hand smoke can be harmful to your baby. There should be no smoking inside the house or in the car. We can offer information and support to help family members QUIT!!! It's never too late to try.
7. Consider taking a CPR class if you have not done so already. All parents and caregivers with children should keep up to date CPR training. Ask us for local resources for CPR classes.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS:

1. Fever -- If your baby looks ill or feels warm, check his temperature. If his axillary (under the arm) temperature is 100 degrees or higher, then your baby has a fever. If your baby has a fever or looks ill, please call us immediately. Do not give Tylenol or other fever reducers unless instructed to do so by a doctor or nurse.
2. Fever is one warning sign of an illness. Others include: poor feeding, vomiting (other than spitting up), diarrhea, increased sleepiness/lethargy, or just not looking right. Please call the office immediately if any of these are present.
3. Siblings -- If you have other children, they may have mixed feelings about the new baby. Remember to set aside special time for your other children each day. Asking a brother or sister to help in the baby's care if they wish, may help them feel useful and minimize normal sibling rivalry. NEVER leave the baby alone with a young child.
4. Pets -- NEVER leave pets alone with a baby and assure that pets do not sleep in or around a baby's crib. Remember that pets can be jealous too!

This information is meant to supplement our discussions in the office during your little one's routine check-ups. Please keep a list of questions that you have in regards to your baby so they can be addressed during the visit. ALWAYS trust your parental instincts and call us if you are worried about your baby.

NEXT VISIT: At two months of age