

## ***YOUR TWO WEEK OLD***

### ***BECOMING A PARENT***

By now you are probably realizing that you actually are a parent of a newborn – and may be feeling amazed and a little overwhelmed by that. We hope the following guidelines will help.

Your baby will have his own personality and temperament – and he is probably beginning to show you signs of that already. He may wake up with a vigorous cry, or he may wake up slowly with a yawn or a coo. As you pay attention to your infant, you will learn more about what he likes and does not like. You will know your baby better than any one else does – so trust yourself to make decisions for your baby.

You cannot spoil a baby for the first 4 – 6 months by holding her too much. Babies at this age need to be held and cuddled and be close to adults.

Talk to your baby when he is awake. He will enjoy seeing your face and hearing your voice.

Babies can catch germs very easily because their immune systems are not mature. You can help your baby stay healthy by:

Breastfeeding your baby

Avoiding contact with cigarette smoke

Keeping your baby away from sick people. It is not rude to ask friends and relatives who are sick to wait to visit until they are feeling better.

Not taking your baby into crowded areas like theaters, shopping malls and churches

Washing your hands before you touch your baby

As a parent, you realize there are new responsibilities. You may not have thought about it, but you will need a will so you, rather than the state, will determine who will care for your child in the event of your death.

Every parent can feel overwhelmed and anxious. If you are a new mother and are feeling depressed, anxious, tired or are crying a lot, you may have post-partum blues. Please check with your doctor and obtain help . You can also call confidentially to 1-800-773-7090

### ***FEEDING***

#### ***Breastfed Infants:***

+Breastfeed your infant as often as she appears to be hungry. Most infants nurse every 2 to 3 hours.

+Breastfeeding infants usually have a bowel movement soon after every feeding.

+Mothers who are breastfeeding should continue taking their prenatal vitamins until the infant is weaned.

+Breastfeeding infants will get their fluoride through their mother's milk – so mother should drink some fluoridated water daily. (Brita and Pur filters do not remove all the fluoride.)

+Breastfed infants need additional vitamin D. Vitamin D comes as a liquid and can be

purchased over the counter without a prescription in many formulations. Please check the directions on the brand you buy to make sure your baby is receiving 400 units of vitamin D each day.

+If you choose to express breast milk:

You can express milk at any time – before, during, after or in between a feeding.

You will need to be warm, comfortable and relaxed

Stimulate your nipples to simulate nursing and promote the “let-down” of milk

You can store milk in the refrigerator for 48 hours or in the freezer for 4 – 6 months in a plastic or glass container.

*Formula fed infants:*

+If you are using formula, the concentrated and powdered cans are cheaper. Make sure to read the directions carefully. It is dangerous to add more water than the instructions state. If you add more water, the formula is more dilute and will not provide the nourishment your baby needs.

+Generic or store-brand formulas (like Walmart’s) are just as healthy for your baby as the name brands (like Similac and Enfamil) and are much cheaper.

+ Most babies at this age take 2 – 3 ounces every 2 – 3 hours. Your baby will show you when he is full, so please do not force your baby to finish all the formula in the bottle.

+Do not warm bottles in the microwave as the milk in the middle of the bottle may be too hot.

### ***CRYING***

Babies can cry 1 – 4 hours a day. Sometimes they cry because they are hungry, tired, have a dirty diaper, or just want to be held. Sometimes babies even cry and we cannot determine the reason. Many babies cry more in the early evening – just when you are trying to have dinner. Over the next few weeks it is normal for babies to cry a little more. Studies show that babies do the most crying between 6 to 8 weeks of life and then the amount of crying decreases fairly quickly. We don’t know all the reasons that babies cry more but here are a few ideas:

Your baby is overly tired:

Babies who stay awake too long can easily take in too much stimulation and often become “wired”. They have a difficult time falling asleep once they are overly tired or overly stimulated. As adults, we easily fall asleep if we are tired, but infants often do the opposite. They look wide awake – but act fussy, because they are too tired. To help prevent this situation, provide your baby with the opportunity to fall asleep in a quiet, dark place if he has been awake for more than 15 – 20 minutes after feeding.

Your baby is overly stimulated:

Since your baby is spending more time awake, he is taking in so much new information. He is hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting and feeling new things – and his little brain can become overwhelmed. Maybe this is why babies seem to cry more later in the day. They often also cry more after a busy day - a day when you have had company or visited a new place. After you have had an active day, you might want to plan a quiet day at home to allow you and your baby to relax and recuperate.

Since babies are easily stimulated, just seeing your face or hearing your voice will be pleasure enough for your baby. Don't feel that you need to do anything else to help your baby learn at this age.

*When your baby is crying, you can try:*

Changing the diaper

Changing the clothes or blanket to see if your baby is too hot or too cold

Feeding your baby

Checking the baby for anything which might cause pain – like an open diaper pin

*If your baby keeps crying, you may want to try:*

Rocking the baby

Gently stroking the baby's head

Using a pacifier

Going for a walk or a ride in the car

Giving the baby a warm bath

Playing soft music

Making a “shhh” sound or playing a CD with white noise

Asking a friend or relative to help you.

*See the Soothing handout from Prescriptions for Parents*

*If your baby continues to cry*, remember that babies may need to cry. The only way they can release all the tension that has built up inside from all the new things they have been learning is by crying. So, your baby may be saying he needs to be left alone to cry. Try swaddling your baby snugly in a blanket and laying her in her crib in a quiet, dark room. Leave the room and allow her to cry for a short time (10 – 15 minutes). This is not “the cry it out method” of sleep training. This is just allowing time for your baby to avoid stimulation and decompress from the day's activities. Often babies will fall asleep and sleep well after being allowed this brief time of crying. If your baby is still crying, then go in and pick him up. He may now respond to one of your interventions.

Please know that your baby is not crying because you are a bad parent!

If you are concerned your baby might be crying because he is sick, please call your pediatrician or family doctor. If you feel as if you might accidentally hurt your baby, please call for help – a friend or relative, your doctor, or a help line in your community. The National Parent Helpline can be reached at 1-855-4A-PARENT (1-855-427-2736).

**NEVER SHAKE A BABY.** Shaking or spanking a baby can cause serious injury or death.

### ***SAFETY***

#### ***Car Seat:***

Use the car seat for every ride, with your infant placed in the back seat, if possible. The car seat with the infant appropriately strapped faces backwards. Rear facing car seats cannot be used in a position where the air bags might inflate. Make sure the car seat is properly buckled into the car. (Your local police station may be able to help you make sure your car seat is installed correctly.) **PARENTS** – remember you need to buckle up, too!

### *Fires and burns:*

Make sure you have a smoke detector and that it is working properly. Check the battery if it has one and replace every 6 months. Consider having a carbon monoxide detector also. Think of a fire escape plan for your family.

Turn the hot water temperature down to warm or low (120 degrees F) if you can do so.

### *Smoking and alcohol:*

If you smoke anywhere in your home, your baby's risk of dying of SIDS is increased. Your baby may have more colds, ear infections and the possibility of developing asthma. If you cannot quit smoking, you should smoke outside and wear a jacket that you just use to cover your clothes when smoking. Leave that jacket in a closet close to the outside door so your baby will not breathe the particles of smoke. Please talk with your doctor about programs to stop smoking.

If you have problems with alcohol, please talk with your doctor about programs that can help you.

### *Falls:*

Babies move quickly! Don't leave your baby alone on the bed, couch, changing table, or other high place.

### *Violence:*

Unfortunately, violence is affecting more families today. Parents, especially mothers, may find themselves in a relationship that is abusive or dangerous. If you are concerned about your relationship, your safety, or the safety of your child, please talk with your pediatrician or obstetrician who can help you find resources in a confidential manner. To speak with someone by phone and find help near you, call -1-800-799-SAFE (7233).

### *Guns:*

If you have guns in your home, please make sure they are properly stored and locked.

## ***YOUR BABY'S APPEARANCE***

### *Skin*

Babies skin is very sensitive and can show many changes. Your baby's skin may peel and look very dry. You do not need to put any lotion or cream on your baby's skin, but can do so if you would like. Babies often develop red bumps on their faces, cheeks and neck – these bumps may be baby acne or baby dandruff – and generally do not need any treatment. Please talk with your pediatrician if you have concerns about your baby.

### *Soft spot – fontanelle*

Babies are born with a "soft spot" on the tops of their heads. This area is covered by thick tissue but the bones have not yet formed. The soft spot allowed your baby's head to mold and come through the birth canal. It will not hurt your baby if you touch the soft spot, and you can gently wash your baby's hair when you are ready to do so.

### *Circumcision*

If your baby boy was circumcised, you may notice a band of yellow tissue on the

undersurface of his penis. This may look like an infection because of the yellow color but is usually a normal way the penis heals after the operation.

*Umbilical cord*

Umbilical cords can take 2 – 3 weeks to fall off. There is nothing you can do to make the cord fall off sooner. Just keep the cord clean and dry. If you see redness developing on your baby's skin around the umbilicus, please call your pediatrician.

Enjoy this time with your baby!

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