



Caring for your newborn ... and for yourself

Here are a few tips to help you with your first month of caring for a newborn. It's an amazing time, and while there are challenges ahead, we hope you enjoy every moment.

Handling

- Hand washing and/or hand sanitizer use before anyone touches the baby. Your baby's immune system is still developing, this simple step goes a long way to preventing illness.
- Support the head and neck. Your baby does not have the muscle strength to maintain head balance.

Safety

- Infant car seat, rear-facing, middle of the back seat, is the safest place for your baby. Make sure it is snug and that the 5-point harness is also snug with the chest belt being high over the nipple line.
- Do not leave your baby unattended on high surfaces such as changing tables, counters, couches, or beds.

Bonding

- Physical closeness with your baby can help enhance the emotional connection. Gentle strokes, massage, swaddling, rocking, and soothing sounds can help with bonding.

Feeding

- Breast or bottle. We will support whatever decision works best for your baby and family.
- Your baby will feed about every 2-3 hours. If you are feeding formula to your baby, usually 2-3 oz at a time. If breastfeeding, try nursing 10-15 minutes on each breast.
- Burp halfway through feeding.
- How do you know your baby is getting enough? They should have about 5-6 wet diapers per day, several soft stools per day, and be noticeably gaining weight.

Diapering

- Cloth diapers or disposable diapers, keeping dry is key! Change your baby after each bowel movement and when you know they are wet.
- Gently wipe their skin with a warm washcloth or baby wipes, and apply a barrier ointment such as vitamin A & D ointment to prevent diaper rash.

More diapering

- Little girls: Make sure you wipe from front to back to avoid urinary tract infections.
- Little boys: If circumcised, gently clean area and apply petroleum jelly to circumcision to prevent it from sticking to the diaper. If uncircumcised, gently retract foreskin slightly and clean. It will likely not be fully retractable but will loosen over time.

Bathing

- Sponge bath until umbilical cord and circumcision heals (about 2-3 weeks).
- Once able, you can bathe your baby in lukewarm water 2-3 times per week using a soft washcloth, unscented soaps, and baby-safe lotions
- Never leave your baby unattended in any water.

Sleep

- Your newborn will sleep almost 16 hours per day, waking up every 2-4 hours to feed.
- When your baby is not in your arms, he or she should be sleeping on a firm surface (crib, bassinets), without a pillow or loose blankets, laying on their back.

Final tips

- Parents, remember to take care of yourselves, as well. When your baby sleeps, take advantage of the time to rest.
- Allow your partner and other family members to help with the baby and with household chores. Eat properly. And if you have questions, call us.
- You are not alone. Your friends and family both at home and at Family First Medical Group and Women's Healthcare of Illinois are here to help.