



PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATES OF ELIZABETHTOWN, PLLC

NEWBORN CARE

Bathing

Until the navel (and circumcision) is healed, the baby should be sponge bathed. The face, ears and nose should be washed with a soft cloth and plain water. There is no need to clean inside the ears, nose or mouth. Wash the baby's head with mild soap or baby shampoo daily, or as needed. Use a mild soap (Neutrogena or Dove) on the skin, wash into the creases, rinse thoroughly, and pat dry.

In general, it is wise to avoid deodorant, perfumed, creamed or beauty soaps because they tend to cause skin rashes. Oils should not be used, especially on the head. If a scaly, oily, dandruff-like area (cradle cap) appears on the scalp, an anti-dandruff shampoo (Selsun Blue, Head and Shoulders, etc.) should be used 2 to 3 times a week until the condition has cleared.

Changing the Diapers

Your child's diaper should be changed as soon as possible after wetting or soiling. Clean the diaper area with water or unscented wipes and pat dry. Infant girls should be wiped from front to back to keep the vaginal area clean and as free of stool as possible. Disposable diapers, a diaper service, or home-laundered diapers are equally good.

Diaper rash is a frequent problem with the newborn. It is best treated by frequent diaper changes and by the application of A&D Ointment, Balmex, Aquaphor or Desitin (overnight type). Do not use powders. Powders may be accidentally inhaled and damage lung tissue seriously. If the bottom is particularly tender, it may be patted with Mylanta and gently blown dry with a blow



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dryer on cool setting before ointment is applied. Baby wipes are handy, as they are disposable; however, a thin, warm, wet washcloth also works well. If your baby is prone to diaper rashes, we recommend you avoid using wipes. During bath time or during changing time, be careful not to leave the baby unattended on a surface that he may roll off.

The Pacifier

All babies have an instinctive need to suck. This need goes well beyond the sucking that accompanies feeding, and is usually confused with a need for more food. If your baby has been fed, but is busily chewing his thumb or fingers, you may wish to substitute a pacifier. Do not overfeed the baby in an attempt to satisfy his sucking. At first, a pacifier may not be acceptable to the baby, but usually, with persistence, and trying different types, it will be taken.

In recent years, research suggests that using a pacifier at the onset of sleep helps decrease baby's risk of SIDS. However, we do not recommend them in the first two weeks for babies who are breastfed, to decrease suck confusion. The shield between the nipple and the ring should be at least 1- $\frac{1}{2}$ inches across so that the pacifier will not fit into the baby's mouth. Of course, there are some babies who prefer their own hand, and this is quite acceptable.

Never attach the pacifier to the baby's neck with a string, as this can possibly become entangled while the baby is asleep and choke him. Usually the baby will outgrow this need to suck, and will voluntarily give up the hand or pacifier. Pacifiers should be discarded if they show any evidence of wear or damage. As a matter of fact, the same is true of nipples of bottles.



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Walkers

The American Academy of Pediatrics does not recommend using walkers because they are involved in about 24,000 injuries in the US each year. Therefore, we **STRONGLY** do **NOT** recommend walkers. If you insist, the child should never be left unsupervised in a walker. It should have at least 6 wheels to prevent tipping. The base should be wider and longer than the seat height. It should not have an X frame. It should never be used around stairs.

When Your Baby Cries

All babies cry for a certain amount of time, just as they sleep and suck. During the first few weeks, crying is about the only way babies have of expressing themselves and telling you their needs. The baby may cry because he needs a diaper change, he's hungry, hot, cold, wants to be held, or is in pain. It is very common for a baby to cry and fuss at about the same time each day often early in the evening and this may go on for quite a while for no apparent reason.

When your child cries, it's best to first check his diaper. Make sure that the diaper is not soiled, ensure that his clothing is properly adjusted, or pick him up and hold him. Look at all appendages, such as fingers, toes or penis, for any hairs wrapped around them. If he has not been fed recently, offer formula or breast milk. We want to emphasize that hunger should not be assumed to be the cause of crying, and your baby should not be overfed to prevent crying, as this will often lead to more problems. Sometimes, a warm bath or buggy ride or a car ride at the fussy period will help relax him.

Don't be afraid of spoiling your infant by holding him a lot during the first few months of life. This is the time when an



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intimate bond is formed between the parents and the baby, and it is a time when a baby needs to develop a feeling of security in the knowledge that all of his needs will be met. One point of reassurance to all parents is that crying will not harm your child in any way, and it will not hurt if the baby fusses for a few minutes before you are able to attend to his needs. Never let stress build up to the point that you shake the baby, as this is dangerous. If you need a break, ensure that he is safe and lie him down for a while. It is important that you stay calm.