

# Caring for your baby

Appalachian Regional Healthcare hopes that this site can help answer some of your questions as a new parent. You and your baby deserve the best of care, and we are proud to be a part of this new path in your life.

## Diet

For optimum nutrition and health, plan to breastfeed your baby. Baby feedings are every three to four hours, or on demand, or by physician order. Give extra fluids if infant is jaundiced. Burp your baby frequently during feeding. If you bottlefeed your baby, never prop a bottle for any reason.

## Breastfeeding

An infant should nurse from each breast during feedings. Make sure to alternate breasts during feedings. If you finished a feeding on the right breast, then you should start with the right breast at the next feeding. Start with the infant nursing five minutes on each breast with nursing times increasing gradually. Burp infant during feedings.

## Bottlefeeding

If you feed your baby formula, follow instructions on formula package for mixing. Dilute concentrated formula with sterile water. Boil clean bottles and nipples five minutes before using. Do not use formula that has been left in an open can or unrefrigerated bottle for an hour or more.

## Cord care

Cleanse cord at least 3 or 4 times daily with a cotton ball and alcohol. Keep diaper folded below cord until it heals and falls off. Call your doctor if any pus-like drainage or odor is present.

## Bathing

Make sure room is warm before starting bath. Never leave the infant unattended during baths. Wipe your baby's eyes, from inner areas to outer, with plain water. Bathe infant daily with mild soap. Wash baby's head during bath. Do not be afraid to wash the "soft spot". Do not put infant in tub until the cord stump has healed - approximately two weeks.

## Skin care

Call your doctor if any red, raised, pus-filled rashes appear on your baby's skin. Use baby lotion, not baby oil, for dry skin. Baby powder may be used sparingly, but do not shake powder directly onto infant's bottom.

## Circumcision care

Cleanse area with cloth and warm water daily. Some doctors may place a ring on the penis. Do not remove this ring. It will fall off within seven to 14 days. If no ring is present, cleanse with warm water and apply Vaseline for several days to prevent irritation. Babies

that are not circumcised should be bathed daily. Do not push foreskin back without checking with your physician.

### **Temperature**

Notify your doctor if your baby's temperature is above 100.6 degrees during infant's first month, or above 102 degrees if infant is older. If baby is crying or fussing, his or her temperature should be taken. If the baby has a temperature, take any heavy clothing off of the baby, dress the baby in light weight clothing such as a t-shirt and a diaper. Never place a baby in a bath with alcohol, this may be dangerous.

### **Your baby's breathing**

Babies breathe through their noses. A bulb syringe should be kept available at home to keep the baby's nasal airway clear. Bedside humidification may assist the baby in breathing easier, especially in winter months with the dry heat from furnaces. Always place infants on their backs to sleep.

### **Car seats**

Many states have a law which requires that all children under 40 inches or 40 pounds ride in car seats. Fines or penalties can be given for not following this law. Bring a car seat to the hospital on the day of discharge. If a seat is not available, check with your local health department.

### **Return appointments**

A return appointment will be made at the time of discharge. You will be given your physician's phone number or address.

### **Newborn blood tests**

Your baby's blood should be tested to detect rare disorders of body chemistry which, if not treated early, cause hypothyroidism, and galactosemia. If your baby was born in the hospital, it was given a blood test to screen for metabolic problems. That test is called a PKU. It may be necessary to repeat this test shortly after discharge. Your baby must have this test repeated by the third week of life. The test can easily be done when you return to the pediatrician. This is a state law which exists for the protection of your baby.