

Your Baby at 2 Weeks

Medications: None until 2 months of age unless specifically directed

Next Visit: 2 months of age unless there are other concerns

When is my baby sick?

Babies don't have many ways to tell us they're sick, and sometimes the clues are subtle. An abnormal temperature can be too high (>100.4) or too low (<97). The best way to take this temperature is rectally. Other signs of illness include poor feeding more than 2-3 feedings in a row, poor color, fussiness or sleepiness out of the norm, high heart rate or breathing fast/deep. We expect you to call if you notice any of these symptoms. Taking a rectal temperature is really easy and painless.

<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/fever/Pages/How-to-Take-a-Childs-Temperature.aspx>

Staying Healthy

Although you want to show this beautiful baby off, the immune system of a newborn isn't quite ready for the world yet. Until at least 2 months of age, we recommend limited visitation and exposure. You can get out – get outside if you want to! Just be smart about it. Don't let family & friends who are ill visit. Frequent hand washing is essential in addition to occasional use of hand sanitizer. Here are some additional tips:

- We strongly recommend that anyone who will be caring for your baby receive the Tdap vaccine (tetanus and whooping cough booster) – this includes grandparents, aunts/uncles and baby sitters.
- Be skeptical of those who say “it's allergies,” which are often viral symptoms.
- Avoid theaters, malls, stores. Make trips quick if necessary. Eat in an outdoor restaurant if the weather allows.
- Consider avoiding flying with your baby until at least 2 months of age.
- Visiting with toddlers, preschoolers, etc. carries risk. They get sick often and may not know they're sick yet.

Odd Habits

Babies sneeze and hiccup a lot. Their chins quiver and their legs kick or briefly shake. Many of these odd habits are the result of an immature nervous system that hasn't figured it all out yet. Sneezing isn't allergies in babies under 4-6 months of age.

Getting Some Sleep

Parents of newborns are invariably sleep-deprived. Take comfort in knowing that this phase is temporary and a sleep pattern will become more predictable. Until then, try to “enjoy” the time with your little one by getting as much sleep as you can when they are sleeping themselves.

Accept help from people who want to help by allowing them to hold your baby for a few hours while you nap, bring you a meal, do the laundry, etc. About 2-3 weeks of age or so, if breastfeeding is going well, we recommend that you offer a bottle with some expressed breast milk about once a day or every other day. Allow Dad or grandparents to give that bottle while Mom takes a nap. If you will need the flexibility of some bottle feeding, this is a good time to introduce it.

Reducing the Risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome)

We don't know why it happens, but we do know some factors that either reduce or increase the risk. First and foremost, babies must sleep on their backs - we know this helps. Make sure caregivers all know that this is necessary – it might be different than what they did with their own children. Also:

- Firm sleeping surface, no pillows, comforters, large stuffed animals
- No bumper pads even though they are really cute
- Babies should sleep in parents' room but not parents' bed until at least 4 months of age
- Pacifiers reduce the risk and we don't really know why
- No smoking ever – during pregnancy or after delivery
- Avoid overheating – it's better to be a little cooler than warmer
- Sleep positioners are NOT safe.

Tummy Time

Even though we want your baby to sleep on his or her back EVERY TIME, your baby still needs to spend some time each day on their tummy. Tummy time may begin any time after the cord has fallen off and is healed. We recommend that your baby spend at least a few minutes, several times per day on their bellies to work on head/neck control and to reduce the incidence of an abnormal head shape (plagiocephaly or brachycephaly). If your baby is one of those that really doesn't enjoy tummy time, start slowly and increase as tolerated. Tummy time can also happen on your chest or raised up on a boppy pillow – sometimes that is much better tolerated in the beginning.

Feeding Your Baby

Breast milk is the only food your baby needs until about 4-6 months of age. If you need to use an infant formula instead of breast milk, or to augment your baby's feeding, we recommend an iron-fortified, milk-based formula. We have no brand preference, and parents note that babies tolerate one better than another. Soy is not recommended as a first-line formula.

Vitamin D Supplements

For all exclusively breastfed babies, and for most partially breastfed babies, a little extra Vitamin D is necessary. This has to be given TO the baby directly, and not through extra vitamin supplements for mom. Various concentrations of Vitamin D are available. Easiest to find are

the forms made by Mead-Johnson (D-Vi-Sol, Tri-Vi-Sol) which are dosed at 1 ml per day to give 400 IU/day. Some other forms are available at Central Market, Whole Foods and other health stores, and may be in more concentrated form. Double check that you are giving 400 IU daily to your baby – some of the more concentrated forms are given as 1 or 2 drops for 400 IU.

Bowel Movements & Gas

Breastfed babies usually have loose, runny, seedy stools. Formula-fed babies tend to have slightly firmer stools. Babies can have 8 stools/day or once every 4-5 days. Babies can strain even when stools are soft, and this is not constipation. Constipation is hard, pebbly stools rather than a specific frequency of bowel movements.

All babies have gas. Gas may happen because of swallowed air, so getting a good burp during/after a feeding is a good idea. Most gas, however, is produced during the digestive process and can't be burped out. Babies' tummies are digesting for the first time, and they are developing their own healthy flora; adjustments in both increase gassiness for a time. Parents may want to give gas drops (Simethicone, Mylicon) or herbal gas remedies (Gripe Water) which are likely safe but not proven to be helpful in research. It might be more helpful to lay a baby on the tummy or do bicycle-peddling movements with their legs to help intestines move things along.

Colic

Colic is the daily presence of several hours of intense crying, generally at fairly predictable times in the evening. It generally starts at about 2 weeks of age, peaks about 6 weeks of age, and fades out about 3-4 months of age. It is frustrating and fairly common – about 1 in 5 babies. For most babies, it is not because of formula intolerance or because of what mom did or didn't eat. For most babies, it's a normal developmental phase and simply has to be survived. It gets better! We strongly recommend soothing techniques shown in Dr. Harvey Karp's book, *The Happiest Baby on the Block*. These babies can try your patience, so if you feel yourself losing your temper or getting very frustrated, ask for help. Even a 30-60 minute break from your screaming baby can help you cope much better. If you are struggling with colic, let us know. We want to help you. More great information on colic can be found here:

<http://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/crying-colic/pages/Colic.aspx>

Vaccines

We start the vaccine series at 2 months of age. If you have any concerns about vaccines, please let us know. We are confident in the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine schedule recommended by the AAP. We do not encourage alternative schedules. If you choose to follow an alternative schedule, we would be happy to discuss what vaccines are most important early and which diseases are the least threat to a newborn.