



Renfrew County and  
District Health Unit

# Caring for Baby

## *Your Newborn Baby*

In the hospital, nurses, lactation consultants and doctors will help support you in learning how to care for your baby. You may also receive a visit from a Public Health Nurse.

[Once you are home](#), with consent, a Public Health Nurse will contact you by telephone to provide you with support, advice and information. During this time the Public Health Nurse will determine if you would benefit from extra support from our [Healthy Babies Healthy Children](#) (HBHC) program. You may also refer yourself to the HBHC program during pregnancy or once your child is born by calling our Health Information Line at **613-735-8666** or **1-800-267-1097**.

## *Newborn Screening Tests*

[Newborn screening](#) is important for every baby. In Ontario, screening for at least 28 diseases is done by taking a small sample of blood from your baby's heel after 24 hours of age. Most babies are born healthy but about one in 1,000 babies will have one of the diseases screened for. The benefits of early detection and treatment far outweigh the discomfort of the blood test for your baby. Breastfeeding and skin-to-skin contact with your baby during the heel prick and after will ease the sensation of pain.

## *Well-Baby Visits*

**Routine well-baby visits are important for ensuring your baby stays as healthy as possible:**

- A well-baby visit to your [family doctor](#) is recommended in the first week after leaving the hospital.
- If you have a midwife, they will provide your well-baby visits for the first six weeks and then care will be continued with your family doctor.
- Your baby's length, weight and head size will be measured.
- He will be given a physical exam and checked for normal growth and development.
- Immunizations will be discussed and given at future appointments.
- These visits are a great time to ask questions (keep a list) and discuss any concerns, such as what to do if your baby gets sick.

**See Baby's Warning Signs on page 103 in the online prenatal program to learn when it is time to visit your health care provider.**



*Routine well-baby visits are important for ensuring your baby stays as healthy as possible.*



*If you have concerns about your baby's jaundice or about how well your baby is feeding, contact your health care provider.*

## Newborn Care

### Jaundice

Newborn jaundice is a condition where your baby's skin and whites of their eyes start to turn a yellowish colour.

#### Jaundice:

- is a common condition.
- often appears when your baby is 3 to 5 days old.
- can be reduced by frequent breastfeeding (eight or more times in 24 hours).

If you have concerns about your baby's jaundice or about how well your baby is feeding, contact your health care provider.

## Cord Blood Banking

[Cord blood banking](#) involves the collection of stem cells from your baby's umbilical cord to store them for future medical use, i.e. treating certain diseases. To participate in cord blood banking, you must discuss it with your health care provider during pregnancy as it involves additional charges and arrangements.

#### How is it done?

- Your baby's umbilical cord is clamped after birth.
- There will be a two-minute delay to allow your baby to receive the greatest amount of their blood.
- The two-minute delay decreases your baby's risk of anemia and the risk of iron deficiency in the first three months of life.
- Cord blood collection is recommended after the delayed cord clamping.

## Intact Penis or Circumcision

The Canadian Paediatric Society does not recommend routine circumcision, which is why provincial health plans do not cover the procedure. There are risks and benefits to circumcision and also to keeping the penis intact. For a breakdown of the risks and benefits of the circumcision procedure and how to care for an intact or circumcised penis, the Canadian Paediatric Society offers some excellent information on their [Caring For Kids](#) page. There is no need to rush into a decision. If you are undecided or if you have any questions, talk to your baby's health care provider.

## Comforting Your Baby

Your baby has her own unique personality. With time, you will start to learn your baby's temperament and how to comfort her.

#### What to expect in the early weeks:

- Babies usually have fussy periods in the late afternoon or evening.
- Babies often want to breastfeed more during certain times of the day; also known as cluster feeding.
- During growth spurts (around 3 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months and 6 months of age) babies feed more often and breast milk supply increases to meet your baby's needs.



*Comforting your baby when she needs you will not spoil her but will make her feel loved and respected.*

Tips to Comfort Your Baby	
Babies Need:	To comfort your baby, you can:
Frequent feeding and sucking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breastfeed your baby. Put your baby to the breast to soothe and comfort.</li> <li>• Burp and check/change your baby's diaper.</li> <li>• Avoid a pacifier in the early weeks as this may interfere with breastfeeding.</li> </ul>
To be held and comforted often	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold baby skin-to-skin: mom or dad.</li> <li>• Carry your baby in a sling.</li> <li>• Massage your baby.</li> <li>• Try different positions, such as rocking or walking.</li> </ul>
Calm, quiet time and a place to fall sleep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch for early signs your baby is getting tired.</li> <li>• Reduce noise and dim the lights.</li> <li>• Once asleep, babies often sleep through normal household sounds.</li> </ul>
Comforting sounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play music, sing or read to your baby.</li> <li>• Try some "white noise" (soft <i>sshhh</i> sound with your voice, fan, vacuum cleaner, or dishwasher).</li> </ul>
Playtime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make eye contact and smile.</li> <li>• Make funny faces and sounds.</li> <li>• Talk, sing, read.</li> <li>• Take your baby out for a walk.</li> </ul>
To be warm but not hot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dress your baby as warmly as you are, plus one more layer.</li> <li>• Your baby's chest, tummy and back should feel warm, and not sweaty or cool.</li> </ul>

With time, you will start to learn your baby's temperament and how to comfort her.

See your doctor if you are concerned about your baby's crying. Trust your instincts. Your crying baby may be sick.

### Crying

Here are some important tips to remember when responding to your [crying baby](#) :

- All babies cry.
- It is normal for babies to cry.
- Some babies cry more than others.
- Crying does not mean there is something wrong with your baby.
- When your baby cries, it does not mean that you are doing something wrong.

What's important is how you respond to your baby when they are crying. Your baby needs to know that you are there for them when they need you; this helps your baby build trust in you. Infant attachment develops when you respond to your baby in warm and sensitive ways. **Remember: you cannot spoil your baby by responding to their needs.**



*If you ever feel that you may lose control due to your baby's crying, put your baby in a safe place, leave the room for a few minutes, take deep breaths and call a friend to help calm down.*

It is normal to feel upset when your baby cries. If you ever feel angry or worried that you might lose control:

- put your baby in a safe place such as her crib;
- leave the room for a few minutes;
- do something to help calm down;
- take some deep breaths; and
- call a friend or go outside to get some fresh air.

### *Take care of yourself*

- Eat well and drink plenty of fluids.
- Take a nap when your baby naps.
- Keep active, go for a walk.
- Call friends or family for support.

If you feel depressed about your baby's crying, talk with your health care provider or a public health nurse at **613-735-8666** or **1-800-267-1097**.

### **Never shake your baby!**

- [Shaking](#) can damage your baby's brain and may cause death.
- No child at any age should be shaken.
- Ask for help.
- Take time to calm down.

### *Healthy Sleep*

[Sleep](#) is very important to your child's health and well-being. [Good sleep](#) habits start from birth. It is normal and healthy for babies to wake up during the night to feed. As babies get older and become more active during the day, they sleep for longer stretches at night.

### **Infant sleep patterns**

- Sleep patterns vary as babies grow.
- Newborns typically have one long sleep period every day.
- One-month-olds will be alert for one to three-hour stretches and sleep an average of 15 hours in a 24-hour day.
- Infants may have their days and nights mixed up (awake more at night).

### **Reasons for night waking include:**

- hunger
- need comforting
- growth spurts
- too hot or cold
- illness

### **Breastfeeding at night**

- Newborns wake often during the night because they have small tummies and breast milk is easy for them to digest.
- Expect to breastfeed at least eight or more times in 24 hours.
- During growth spurts newborns may wake more often to feed.



*Listening to a baby cry for long periods of time can be very frustrating. Ask a family member or friend to help or speak with a public health nurse.*

**A consistent, predictable daily routine helps children feel secure and develop regular sleep habits.**



*The safest place for your baby to sleep or nap is in a crib, cradle or bassinet that meets current Canadian Safety Regulations.*

### Bedtime routines

- At around three months of age you can start a bedtime routine to help your baby learn that sleep time is coming.
- A bedtime routine could include a bath, quiet reading or singing, a cuddle and gentle rocking with lights dimmed.

### Safe Sleep

How to create [safe sleep](#) for your baby and reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS):

- Position your baby on her back to sleep.
- Place your baby to sleep in a crib next to the adult's bed for the first six months.
- Breastfeed.
- Have a smoke-free home.
- Keep your baby warm but not hot.
- Keep stuffed toys out of baby's crib.
- Do not use crib bumper pads, duvets or comforters, sheepskin, blankets or pillows.

### Where will your baby sleep?

The safest place for your baby to sleep or nap is in a crib, cradle or bassinet that meets current [Canadian Safety Regulations](#).

### Room sharing is recommended.

- Place your baby to sleep in a crib, cradle or bassinet next to your bed, in your room.
- Room share for the first six months (when the risk of SIDS is highest) helps your baby sleep safely and lowers the risk of SIDS.

### Bed sharing or co-sleeping is not recommended.

- It is when a baby shares the same sleep surface, such as an adult bed, sofa or armchair, with an adult or another child.
- Sharing the same sleep surface increases a baby's risk of SIDS and suffocation. This risk is even higher for babies less than four months old.

### Tummy time and prevention of flat head

- Tummy time helps [prevent a flat spot](#) on baby's head.
- It also helps your baby develop strength and coordination.
- Place your baby on his or her tummy two to three times a day soon after he or she is born.
- Gradually increase the duration of tummy time, working your way up from one minute until your baby can hold up her own head (often around three to four months).

### Shopping for Your Baby

All parents want the best for their baby.

You've probably noticed the enormous amount of marketing of baby products aimed at new parents and parents-to-be. Before heading out to shop, think about what your baby really needs. Here are some tips when you are considering what to buy for your baby:

- Remember that safety is always important.
- Babies grow out of clothing and certain types of toys and equipment very quickly.
- All your baby really needs for a great beginning is your love, nourishment, playtime and protection.



*Before heading out to shop, think about what your baby really needs.*

You may find the chart below helpful in deciding what to buy for your baby. Check the items your baby needs. Mark additional items you want. Add more items if needed.

Need	Want	Item
		<b>Diapering:</b> Diaper Bag
		Newborn Diapers
		Diaper Disposal Pail
		Skin Cream
		Change Pad
		Wipes or Cleaning Clothes
		<b>Sleeping:</b> Crib and Sheets
		Mattress Cover
		2-3 Light Blankets
		Monitor
		<b>Going Out:</b> Car Seat
		Stroller
		Baby Carrier
		<b>Bathing:</b> 4-6 Washcloths
		3 Towels
		Unscented Soap
		Bath Tub
		Bath Accessories
		Baby Shampoo
		<b>Feeding:</b> Nursing Bras and Pads
		Breast Pump
		<b>Clothing:</b> 4-6 Receiving Blankets
		6-8 Sleepers
		5-6 One Piece Undershirts
		Sweater/Coat
		Snowsuit/Hat
		3-4 Pairs of Socks
		Infant Shoes
		<b>Playtime:</b> Books
		Mobile
		Bouncy Infant Seat
		<b>Equipment/Other:</b> Thermometer
		Swing
		Playpen
		Mild Detergent



*There is no such thing as child proof. Supervising your baby is the best way to prevent injuries.*

## Safety and Baby Equipment

There are many ways to create a safe place for your baby to play, learn and grow. Begin by learning:

- how to safely install and use your [car seat](#) ;
- what safety features to look for in baby equipment; and
- how to adapt your home for your [baby's safety](#).
- how to keep your children [safe with pets](#) in your home.

There is no such thing as child proof. Supervising your baby is the best way to prevent injuries.

### Facts

- In Canada, 66 per cent of all injuries to children under five years old occur in the home.
- In Canada, over 20,000 children are seen each year in emergency departments with injuries that occurred in the home. (Health Surveillance and Epidemiology Division, Public Health Agency of Canada, 2005)
- Drowning is the second leading cause of death among Ontario children under five years old. (Canada Institute for Health Information, 2005)
- Injuries are not just accidents; they are largely predictable and preventable events.

### Car Seats

Health Canada reports that car crashes are the number one cause of death for children aged one to nine. A correctly used child restraint will reduce the likelihood of a child being injured or killed in a crash by 75 per cent.

It is important to make sure that you use the right car seat for your baby and use it properly every time. Read your car seat manual and your vehicle manual as they provide the information you need for proper installation and use of your car seat.

### Babywearing

By "wearing" your baby against your chest your baby may cry less. Being close helps you to build a bond and learn your baby's cues (movements, gestures and expressions). Make sure your baby is [visible and kissable](#). See more tips on [safety for baby slings and carriers](#).





