

Dr Christa Swanepoel new born guide



doctor
christa
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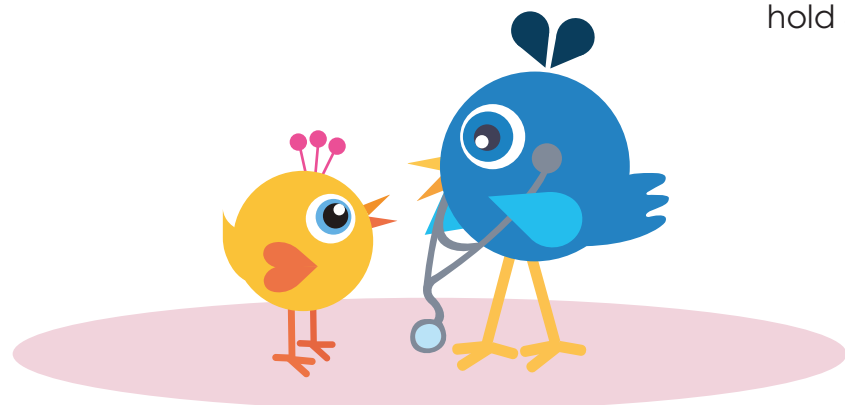
Congratulations on the birth of your baby and welcome to the most amazing rollercoaster ride of your life! Once the excitement of your new arrival has settled, the daunting reality of caring for a newborn can come as a surprise. I know that you will have a lot of questions as you adjust to life with a newborn, and I am here to help you navigate the Mom Life a wee bit easier.

Feeding your baby



This is a subject that can cause so much anxiety for new moms. Firstly, I have to stress that whether you choose to breastfeed or to formula feed the emphasis should always be on the 4 and that either of those choices are ok. Choose what feels right for you! Almost all moms are worried and wants to know if they are doing it right, if the baby is getting enough milk and if the milk is coming in. Remember that your baby is learning to feed, and that you are learning to feed him/her. Be patient with yourself and ask for help, should you need it. We can arrange for a lactation specialist to come in and assist you so that you are confident going home.

It is important to know that your baby needs only a little colostrum in the first 3 days and that their stomachs can only hold 5-7ml per feed on day 1. Do not despair if there are not fountains of milk flowing from your boobs on the first day. Your baby suckling from the breast is THE best stimulus for milk production and its is important to feed on demand at let nature take its course. The volume of your newborn's stomach increases rapidly from day 3 onwards, and by 4 weeks can hold 80- 150ml.

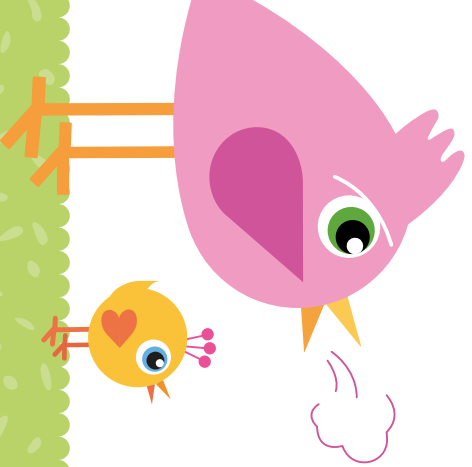


How big is a newborn's stomach?



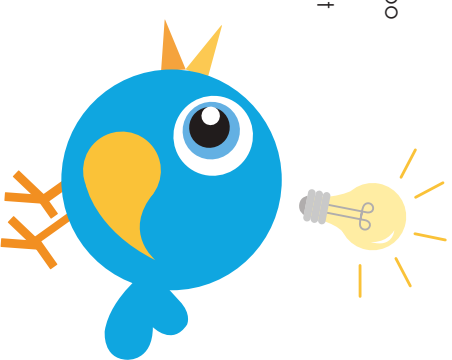
When should I worry about my newborn's breathing?

Newborn babies, and especially preemie babies may have breathing that pauses for up to 10 seconds at a time. This is called periodic breathing. There may be several such pauses close together, followed by a series of faster and shallower breaths. This breathing pattern is very common in the first 2 weeks of life and usually diapers offer a couple of months. If there is any nasal flaring, grunting sounds with every breath, coughing or a blue, purplish discoloration of your baby's skin and mouth, please seek medical advice as a matter of urgency, as this



Is it normal for my baby to have breast buds?

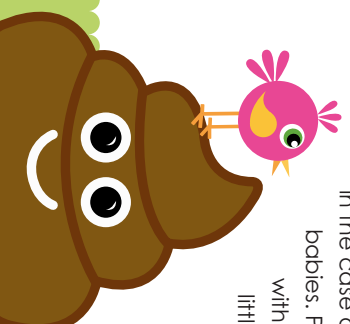
Newborn babies (boys and girls) can have mildly swollen or enlarged breast buds or lumps under the nipple. This is due to exposure of the baby to a surge in maternal hormones late in pregnancy. These little breast buds can even produce "milk" and this too is due to maternal hormones. This is almost always transient and not a reason for concern. For a while after birth it might even continue to grow. Over weeks, or sometimes even months, when there is no more exposure to the hormones, the breast tissue begins to shrink and eventually becomes quite flat. Please contact your Paediatrician your baby has a fever, there is bloody discharge from the nipples or if the breast looks red and inflamed. These are signs of possible infection.



Poo Patrol



A big part of being a parent is fretting about our babies's stooling habits. Are there too many poops, too little, are they too runny, too hard? A newborn's poop changes a few times in the first few months of life. What is normal and what is not? In the first 24 hours after birth your baby will pass thick tar-like black stools called meconium. This is true for breast as well as formula fed infants. Meconium consists of mucus, skin cells and amniotic fluid swallowed by your baby whilst still in the womb. Black stools after the newborn period is not normal, and you should seek a medical opinion for this. After 3 days the stool colour changes from black to mustard yellow in the case of breastfed infants and yellow green in the case of formula fed babies. Please note that breastfed babies can have a runny watery stool with every feed for the first 5-6 weeks whereafter it can change to as little as one stool in 7-8 days. The consistency of the stool of formula fed babies are more formed and puttyish. Formula fed babies should have a stool at least daily or every second day at most. Please phone your Paediatrician if the stool is hard and pellet like, the colour is white or gray or if you detect any blood in your baby's poop.



The Poop Patrol Chart



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Greenish-black

- Black, tar-like stools called Meconium.
- Baby should pass the first stool within the first 24 hours of life.
- Normal in breast and formula fed newborns and usually last for 2-3 days.



Khaki

- These are common for babies who have just started solids.
- Consistency can vary but is usually firm yet still soft.
- If baby passes hard or pellet-like stool, contact your doctor immediately.



Mustard yellow

- These are normal in exclusively breastfed babies.
- Seen on third day after birth.
- Seedy, soft & watery stools
- Baby may have at least one stool after every breastfeed for the first few weeks.



Orange

- These can be seen in babies eating solid food.
- Food and medication taken by the mother may change the colour of the stool.



Yellow-green

- These are common in formula fed infants.
- The consistency is pastier and firmer than that of breast-fed infants.
- Frequency can vary but your baby should usually have 1 stool per day.



Bright green

- If stool is frothy and bright green, it could mean that your baby is getting too much foremilk and not enough fat, hindmilk.
- If your baby is not picking up weight and is unwell, please contact your Paediatrician.



Red

Eating beetroot could colour your baby's poo.

BUT it is not normal for your baby to have any blood in their stool and you should contact your doctor immediately.



Grey or white

Grey or puttyish-white stools may be an indication that there is a problem with your baby's intestinal tract. Seek medical attention immediately.



Black

Black stools after the newborn period is not normal.

It can be a sign that there is bleeding in the gut and you should contact your doctor immediately.

Questions about the nether regions.

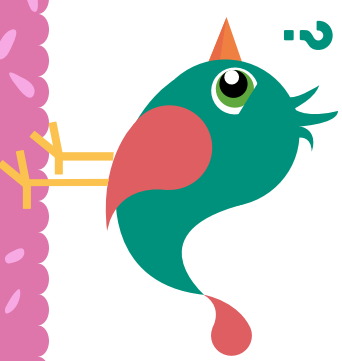


The newborn has excess hormones (see breast buds) and this could cause the genitals to appear swollen. The baby also has excess fluid and this can in turn cause the face and eyes to look puffy and swollen. Again, this is transient and will disappear automatically. Because of the maternal hormonal surge baby girls may also have a milky white or clear vaginal discharge; this is normal and will disappear in 1-4 weeks. Baby boys may also have excess fluid surrounding the testicles (hydrocoele), causing the scrotum to appear swollen. This excess fluid will be resorbed spontaneously and this will not have any adverse effects

Help! My baby is loosing weight !



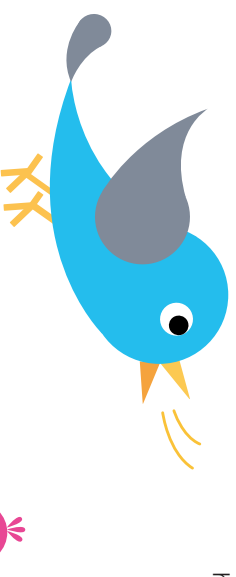
Weight gain is directly correlated to health and wellness, and it is therefore no surprise that the initial weight loss a newborn experiences is of great concern to the parents of these babies. It is normal for almost all babies to loose up to 10% of their body weight in the first 3-5 days of life. Thereafter the weight stabilises and baby begins to gain weight and should return to birthweight, by no later than day 14. The reason for this initial weight loss is mostly due to fluid losses in the early days of life. This holds true for both breast and formula fed infants. It is not normal for any baby to loose more than 12% of his/ hers birthweight, or to continue losing weight after day 7. If your baby is very sleepy and lethargic, it may be a sign of dehydration and/or low blood glucose and medical advice should be sought immediately. To prevent these complications, it is important to feed your baby on demand and at regular intervals. A baby that is feeding well and enough should have at least 5 wet, and between 3 and 5 dirty nappies per 24 hour cycle. Your baby's first follow-up visit is usually scheduled between 10 and 14 days of life. One of the most important things that will be assessed at this visit is weight and any problems encountered, will be addressed.



Soft Spot (fontanel) concerns.

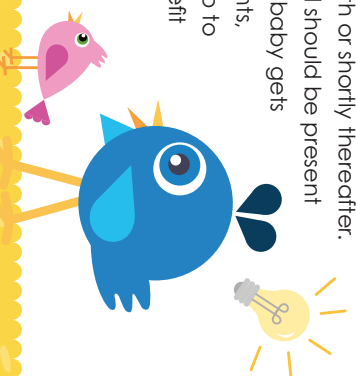
The Umbilical Cord

Your baby has openings or fontanels in their skull bones to allow for the rapid brain growth that occurs in the first year. The more noticeable one is located towards the front part of the baby's skull and can vary in size. This soft spot will only close somewhere between 9 and 18 months. There is a smaller one towards the back of the skull and this one usually closes between the second and third month. You might notice a pulsation under your baby's front fontanel. This might look kind of scary but I can assure you it's all normal. The movements are caused by blood pulsating through a big vein in your baby's brain. Although there is no actual bone covering your baby's fontanels, the brain is well protected from harm by several layers of thick coverings to protect it. It is almost impossible to cause harm by touching and handling your baby in the day to day cares.



The Moro or Startling Reflex

I often get asked what a parent can do because the baby startles so often and that it then wakes them up. The Moro reflex is an involuntary primitive reflex and will be tested for by your Paediatrician at birth or shortly thereafter. This startling reflex is normal, should be symmetrical and should be present until your baby is between 3 and 6 months old. As your baby gets older and has more voluntary control of their movements, this reflex will disappear. Swaddling your baby may help to control these involuntary jerks and has the added benefit of making them feel safe and secure. Swaddling also simulates the enveloping and protective feeling of the womb in those early days after birth.



"It absolutely freaks me out!" Talking about the umbilical cord stump, I have heard this from so many new moms over the years. Don't be scared as cleaning the cord does not hurt your baby. The cord usually falls off between day 5 and 14. It is common for babies to cry when you are cleaning the cord, but this is not because it's painful. There is no nerve endings in the cord but baby does feel temperature and therefore cries when the cord is cleaned with surgical spirits. Make sure to clean around the base of the stump at every nappy change. When it has fallen off it's also normal to see a little blood on the cord. This will settle after a few days.

