

Your Child at Birth



CONGRATULATIONS! YOU ARE NOW A PARENT! Feeling anxious, overwhelmed and exhausted is normal. As you begin to adjust to your new life, try to remember that getting as much information and support as you can now will help you make the best decisions for your family in the future.

Crying The average newborn cries two to three hours a day, and sometimes more. Babies this age may cry for no reason and a parent may not be able to stop the baby from crying. Most of the time this is normal. **For tips on coping with crying, turn to page 6.**

Sleep Newborns may sleep up to 20 hours a day, but will not have any sort of sleep pattern for the first two months. It can take up to six weeks for babies to learn to be awake during the day and asleep at night. Let babies form their own schedule by feeding them when they are hungry and putting them to bed when they seem tired.

Nutrition Newborns need to be fed every two to four hours. The American Academy of Pediatrics and many other world-wide organizations strongly support breastfeeding. Baby formula is a popular alternative to breastfeeding for infants less than one year of age. To meet your baby's nutritional needs, baby formula must be prepared exactly as described on the container.

Physical Development – Many babies lose a little weight (5–7% of birth weight) during the first few days of life. They will usually return to their birth weight within two weeks as they begin to eat more during feedings. After the first two weeks, newborns typically gain around one ounce per day for the first two months, and

- › Have almost fully developed senses of taste and smell
- › See objects best when they are 30 to 40 inches away from their face as their eyes cannot yet fully focus at close range. That's why it's so good to hold them close when feeding and interacting with them.
- › Try to lift their head and look around

Social and Emotional Development – Newborns typically:

- › Recognize the voices of mom and dad
- › Recognize familiar caregivers
- › Look at parents when they speak
- › Quiet when a voice is heard

Cognitive Development – Babies respond purely through reflexes at birth. Some common reflexes are:

- › Grasp reflex: baby will tightly grasp objects placed in hand
- › Sucking reflex: baby begins sucking when mouth area is touched
- › Startle reflex: baby pulls arms and legs inward after hearing a loud noise
- › Step reflex: baby makes stepping motions when sole of foot touches a hard surface