



An tOspidéal Náisiúnta Máithreachais
The National Maternity Hospital



CARING FOR YOUR NEWBORN

This booklet may be helpful when caring for your newborn in the first few days and weeks of their life.

Please visit our website www.nmh.ie
or the HSE website www.hse.ie
for more resources and information.



CONGRATULATIONS

[CLICK HERE](#) to view a video for safe **skin-to-skin** practices after birth.

Vitamin K

Offered at all newborn at birth to prevent haemolytic disease of the newborn (a bleeding disorder). For more information [CLICK HERE](#)

RSV Immunization

Offered September to February to all newborns. It is given as an injection at birth. Protects against the RSV virus causing bronchiolitis (a lung infection) during winter months. For more information [CLICK HERE](#).

Crying

Babies cry for various reasons including hunger, dirty nappies, wind, reflux etc. For more information on how to soothe a crying baby, [CLICK HERE](#).

Feeding

Breastfeeding is encouraged, but combination feeding or exclusive formula feeding are also options. Know your baby's feeding cues e.g. hands to mouth or mouth movements. Ask your midwife about combination feeding. Your baby should feed about 8-12 times per day (2-4 hourly). Wake them up if it has been 4 hours. If you need help breastfeeding your baby, please ask the midwives. If needed they can refer you to our lactation consultant. Poor feeding can lead to weight loss, jaundice and dehydration. For more information [CLICK HERE](#).

Nappies

A newborn should have at least one wet and one dirty nappy within the first day of life. They should then have at least 2 wet nappies on day 2 and then at least 3-4 wet nappies every day. Some babies pass stool with every feed, others only pass stool once every 5 days or longer. Seek medical attention if they have not passed stool for 5 days. Make sure the stool is soft, not pale in colour. Stool colour will be either black or green for the first few days (known as meconium) then it will change to a yellow colour.

Mucus

Babies often appear snuffly because of a build-up of mucous and milk. This can be normal and doesn't always mean they have a cold or allergy.

Umbilical cord

A stump is left after the cord was cut at delivery. It will fall off by itself at about 5 to 15 days after birth. Wash your hands before and after you touch the cord. Clean around the base of the cord if needed with cotton wool and cooled boiled water. Keep it dry. Inspect with every nappy change to make sure there is no redness. Fold your baby's nappy down, away from the stump.



Sticky Eyes

Babies' tear ducts haven't fully developed at birth yet. Just wipe each eye with a cotton wool soaked in cooled boiled water from the nose to the ear. Only wipe once. Contact your GP if this doesn't resolve within the first week.

Before Going Home

Your baby will get a hearing test. A Paediatric doctor will do a head-to-toe examination. Your baby's mouth will be assessed for a tongue tie if indicated. No intervention is needed if a tongue tie doesn't interfere with feeding.

Follow Up Checks

All babies need a 2 and 6 week checkup with the GP to ensure they are growing and developing well. Please ensure you book these on time. Their first vaccines will be due at 2 months of age. [CLICK HERE](#) for HSE's "My Child 0-2 yrs"



Tummy Time

When to start? As a newborn at home for 1-3 minutes at a time up to 3 sessions a day. Increase it to 15-30 minutes at 2 months of age.



Baby Baths

Ask your midwife about bathing your baby. For more information [CLICK HERE](#).



Soothers/Dodgies/Pacifiers

Advised to start after breastfeeding has been established (at 1 month of age). May help prevent cot death. Can affect jaw and teeth development. Can lead to more respiratory infections. Advised to remove between ages 1-4 years. For more information [CLICK HERE](#).

Safe Sleeping

Make sure your baby is asleep on their back, feet at the foot of the cot/crib/ Moses basket/pram with their face and head uncovered. The ideal room temperature is 16-20 °C at all times. A babygro and vest are sufficient to keep them warm with one blanket in your home. For more information [CLICK HERE](#)



Heel Prick Test

Your baby will be offered a heel prick test between day 3 and 5 of life. This screens for some conditions that, when managed early, would benefit the baby and prevent serious consequences. For more information [CLICK HERE](#).



Vitamin D

Give 5 microgram of Vitamin D to your baby per day if you are breastfeeding or combination feeding (giving more breast milk than formula). It can be mixed with their milk. 300 ml per day of formula provides 5 microgram of Vitamin D. You can get it over the counter at the pharmacy.



NMH Baby Clinic

We **do not** offer a walk in service. If you are concerned and would like more advice, kindly speak to your GP or public health nurse. They can refer you to our baby clinic if needed. We usually see babies for concerns about jaundice, weight loss, and feeding concerns.

Appointment only Outpatient Service:
Mon-Fri 9:30-15:00 – (01) 637 3440

Please contact your nearest out-of-hours GP or children's hospital for after-hours concerns.

Red flags – signs your baby is unwell:

- Any fever (i.e. temperature of 38 °C or more) up to 12 weeks of age – use a digital armpit (axillary) thermometer!
- Measurements from other locations may not be accurate
- Green vomits
- Strange behaviour e.g. very irritable or drowsy/sleepy
- Pale, marble (mottled) or blue skin
- Difficulty breathing e.g. persistently fast breathing, drawing in under or in between the ribs or flaring of the nose when breathing
- Blood in the poo or pale coloured (beige-white) poo
- Feeding less than 50% of their usual volume
- No wet nappy in 12 hours

If your baby has any of these red flags, go to the closest children's hospital (in Dublin these are CHI at Temple Street, CHI at Crumlin or CHI at Tallaght).

