

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your new baby! Sometimes new parents are a little unsure of themselves at first. As long as your baby is well fed, well loved and comfortable, she doesn't mind a bit if you are less than expert. Do not be afraid to respond to your instincts and be close to your child, as we feel that a newborn infant cannot be "spoiled" by being held or cuddled too much. The most valuable thing parents can do for their babies are to relax and enjoy them.

A normal, healthy, newborn may be plump or thin. Average babies can weigh 7 to 7 ½ lbs. and average height is between 18 to 21 inches. Many healthy, normal full term babies are smaller or larger than average.

At first the baby's head may be somewhat out of shape as a result of birth pressure. The soft spot or fontanel on the top of the head is actually a very tough membrane. Do not be afraid that it will break open.

Please remember that every baby's temperament is different, just as adults differ. You will soon become accustomed to your child's moods. They will have "good" days and "bad" days, and the only way they have to express themselves and their displeasure is to cry. Soon you will learn exactly what your baby desires by observing his actions.

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF NEWBORN BABIES THAT SOMETIMES WORRY PARENTS

- (1) **Noisy Breathing** – Most babies will have a rattling sound when they breathe, and parents may think that the baby is always keeping a cold. If the child is exhibiting no other signs of illness, do not be too concerned. Little babies (like all human beings) normally have mucous in their noses, but sometimes have trouble expelling it. Excess mucous may be removed with a nasal suction bulb.
- (2) **Sneezing** – All babies sneeze repeatedly. This does not mean they are catching a cold, just cleaning their noses.
- (3) **Hiccoughs** – Babies will frequently have hiccoughs, and they usually bother the parents more than the baby! Treatment is not necessary.
- (4) **Spitting Up** – This is a common complaint in newborns. During the first few days of life this is because he has extra fluid and mucous in his stomach. It is also not unusual for some babies to spit up their milk with feeding for the first few months of life. If the spitting up becomes forceful or projectile, please call us. Changing diets and formulas should be done with the guidance of your pediatrician.
- (5) **Getting Red in the Face, Straining with Bowel Movements** – Most babies look like they are having a hard time passing a bowel movement. As long as the stool is soft, do not be concerned about constipation. If you have questions, please call during the regularly scheduled office hours.

- (6) Swollen Breast and Vaginal Bleeding** – Both male and female babies frequently have swelling of breast tissue, and female babies often have some bloody discharge from the vagina during the first week of life. These are related to stimulation of the tissues by the mother's hormones during the pregnancy and gradually go away after birth.
- (7) Blue Feet/Hands** – Often a baby's hands and feet will look blue in color. This is a common occurrence and need not cause alarm.
- (8) Dry Skin** – Dry, flaky skin is perfectly normal for several weeks after delivery and usually requires no treatment.
- (9) Birthmarks** – Most babies have a collection of red, mottled spots on the back of their necks and between their eyebrows. These spots generally fade with time. It is very common for dark skinned infants to have a dark spot at the base of their spine. This, too, will fade with time.
- (10) Puffy Eyes** – Many infants will have puffy eyes for several days after birth. This swelling is transient and is nothing to worry about.
- (11) Facial Rashes** – These are common in the few months of life. Most are caused by blocked pores or irritations to the infant's skin. These rashes will upset you, but they will soon fade. The best treatment is simply to help keep the area dry and clean.
- (12) Bowed Legs** – The legs of the newborn are usually bowed from the curled up position in the uterus for the nine months of the pregnancy. Until the child starts to walk well, the legs will probably remain bowed because nothing has stimulated them to change. Likewise the feet may turn slightly inward or outward, but this is usually normal. We will advise you if corrective measures need to be taken to ensure a normal gait. If you have questions concerning the walking pattern of your child, please ask us at the next well child checkup visit.
- (13) Newborn Jitters** – Most infants startle easily and may jerk violently when disturbed. This is a normal reflex.