



# How to Care for Your Newborn Baby



CHARLES B. WANG  
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

This brochure teaches you how to care for your newborn. It includes tips on feeding, hygiene, skin care, digestive issues, and other health topics.

## 1. Feeding

You can feed your baby breast milk or infant formula. However, breast milk is the best food for your baby because of its health benefits.

### Benefits of Breastfeeding

- It provides the best nutrition for your baby.
- It protects your baby from getting certain infections.
- Breast milk is easier on your baby's stomach than formula and rarely causes allergic reactions.
- It creates a special bond between you and your baby.
- It lowers your risk of breast and ovarian cancers.
- It helps you lose your pregnancy weight faster.
- Your breast milk is free and can be stored.

While you may want to choose formula-feeding when you go back to work, remember that breastfeeding is the best source of food for your baby. Breast milk gives your baby important nutrients that formula does not have. Choose your baby's health: give breast milk instead of formula.

### How often and how much should I feed my baby?

Feed your baby whenever he or she seems hungry.

Babies often show that they are hungry by:

- Moving their heads
- Opening their mouths or puckering their lips
- Sticking out their tongues
- Putting their hands to their mouths

### You are feeding your baby enough if he or she:

- Has at least 6 wet diapers a day
- Has pale yellow urine
- Has 2 to 5 loose yellow stools per day
- Steadily gains weight after the first week
- Sleeps well
- Looks alert and active when awake



*"Breastfeeding has many proven health outcomes for both you and your baby."*



*“Remember, every baby is different, and a feeding schedule is not important. Feed your baby whenever he or she seems hungry.”*

## **Breastfeeding**

Let your doctors and nurses know that you would like to breastfeed when your baby is born. You should start breastfeeding your baby within 30 minutes to an hour after delivery. Nurse your newborn every 2 to 3 hours, or about 8 to 12 times a day. Breastfed babies feed more often than formula-fed babies because human milk is easier to digest. Try to breastfeed for as long as you can. It is best to breastfeed only (no formula) for at least the first 6 months and up to a year after birth.

### **Don't let myths prevent you from breastfeeding:**

- » Breastfeeding will not disfigure your breasts or your body in any way. Breastfeeding is not only good for your baby, but also for you.
- » Formula-feeding is not the only option nor is it the best option for working mothers. Breast milk is easy to store even when you return to work.

If you do not have time to breastfeed throughout the day, use a breast pump to remove milk from your breasts for storage. You can save this milk for later use or for someone else to do the feeding.

Breast milk for healthy infants can be stored for:

- Up to 6 hours at room temperature.
- Up to 1 week in refrigerator.
- Up to 6 months in freezer.

It may take some time and patience for you and your baby to get used to breastfeeding. Breastfeeding classes and lactation consultants in the hospital and health centers are there to help you. Don't be discouraged if you have a hard time breastfeeding—you two will become closer and healthier in the process!

## Formula-feeding

Formula-feeding may be your only option if you cannot breastfeed due to medical reasons. Do not breastfeed if you have a chronic infection that can be passed to your baby. Make sure that any medications you are taking are safe to use while breastfeeding.

Infant formula comes in different forms including ready-to-feed, concentrated liquid, and dry powder.

Forms	Ready-to-feed	Concentrated Liquid	Dry powder
Cost	Most expensive	Less expensive	Least expensive
Methods	No mixing needed.	Mix the concentrate with an equal amount of water (e.g., 2 oz. water and 2 oz. concentrated liquid).	Check the directions on the can. Generally, mix 1 scoop of formula with 2 oz. water. Stir well.

## Bottle-feeding tips

Bottles can be used to store both breast milk and formula milk. Here are some tips on how to handle bottles and store milk safely.

- » Wash your hands before preparing milk.
- » DO NOT heat bottles in the microwave. Microwave will unevenly heat milk, which can burn your baby's mouth and throat. Heat bottles in a container of hot water.
- » Test the temperature of the milk by shaking a few drops on your wrist. The milk should barely feel warm.
- » Hold your baby semi-upright and support the head while feeding. Do not feed your baby while he or she is lying on his or her back.
- » Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle.
- » Keep filled bottles of formula or breast milk in the fridge until just before the feeding.
- » Throw away leftover milk if it has been at room temperature for more than 2 hours or any containers of formula that have been open for 48 hours.



*“Do not put your baby in a tub of water until your baby’s umbilical cord has fallen off and the stump has healed, and after a boy’s circumcision has healed.”*

## **Sterilize**

For infants less than 4 months old, sterilize bottles, nipples, lids, measuring cups, and mixing jugs.

To sterilize, place all of the equipment in a pot of water. The water should completely cover everything in the pot. Cover the pot and bring water to a boil. Keep boiling for 5 minutes. Let cool and remove the equipment with sterilized tongs.

## **Burping**

Burp your baby in the middle and at the end of each feeding to get rid of any air that the baby may have swallowed. There are 3 positions you can use to burp your baby:



- 1) Hold your baby upright with his or her head on your shoulder. Support your baby’s head and back while you firmly pat the back with your other hand.



- 2) Seat your baby on your lap. Support your baby’s chest and head with one hand and gently pat the back with the other.



- 3) Lay your baby on his or her belly across your lap. Support your baby’s head in the crook of your arm and gently pat or rub the back.

## **2. Hygiene**

### **Bathing your baby**

What items are needed to bathe a baby?

- A soft, clean washcloth
- Towels or blankets
- Clean clothes and diaper
- Baby shampoo and baby soap (non-irritating)
- An infant tub
- Cotton balls

## How to give a sponge bath:

- » Make sure the room is warm (about 75° F).
- » Keep your baby covered with a towel or blanket.



- » Start with your baby's face. Use a moistened cotton ball to wipe each eye from the inner corner to the outer corner.
- » Wash the rest of the baby's face with a soft, moist washcloth. Also clean the outside folds of the ears.

- » Put shampoo on a washcloth, and use it to wash your baby's head. Create a lather and rinse.



- » Add a small amount of baby soap to the water or washcloth, and gently bathe the rest of the baby from the neck down. Uncover and wash only one area at a time while you keep the rest of the body covered. Rinse with a clean washcloth or a small cup of water. Try your best to not get the umbilical cord wet.



- » Pay special attention to creases under the arms, behind the ears, around the neck and the genital area. After washing these areas, make sure they are dry. Then dress your baby.

## How to give a tub bath:

- » You can give your baby a tub bath once the umbilical cord has fallen off and the stump has healed, and after a boy's circumcision has healed.
- » Lay out a towel, a clean diaper, and clothes. Make sure the room is warm.
- » Fill the tub with 2 to 3 inches of water that feels warm but not hot, about 90°F (32°C). To test the water temperature, feel the water with your elbow or wrist, or use a bath thermometer.
- » Bring your baby to the bath area and undress him or her completely.
- » Pick up your baby firmly. Place one of your hands under his or her armpit while that forearm supports your baby's neck and head, and the other hand under his or her buttocks. Slowly lower your baby into the infant tub feet first.





- » Use just a little mild soap as you wash your baby with a washcloth from top to bottom, front and back. Clean all skin folds and creases.
- » Wash your baby's scalp with a wet, soapy washcloth.
- » Use moistened cotton balls without soap to clean your baby's eyes and face.
- » For your baby's genitals, a routine washing is all that is needed.
- » After the bath, wrap your baby in a towel immediately. Pat him or her dry, then diaper and dress.



### **Umbilical cord stump care for newborns**

During pregnancy, your baby receives food and air through the umbilical cord. This cord is cut at birth, leaving an umbilical stump. This stump will fall off within 10 to 21 days. Only give sponge baths until the stump falls off.

A newborn's umbilical cord stump must be kept clean and dry. Fold your baby's diaper below the stump or use a special newborn diaper that has a cut-out space for it.



Apply rubbing alcohol (70%) to your baby's cord stump every time you change his or her diaper. Use a cotton ball, Q-tip, or a packaged alcohol swab. Check the umbilical cord for infection each time. Contact your baby's doctor right away if there is any sign of infection.

Signs of infection include:

- Swollen or red skin around the cord stump.
- Pus at the base of the stump.

*“Contact your baby's doctor immediately if there is any sign of infection.”*



### 3. Skin Care

#### **Why do babies get a rash in their diaper area?**

Babies often get rashes in the diaper area because the skin there is in contact with stool and urine. Change wet diapers frequently and wipe well after bowel movements. You can also apply a white ointment, called *zinc oxide*, or A & D ointment to protect the skin. If the rash worsens despite the ointment, see your baby's doctor.

#### **Why is my baby's skin peeling?**

It is normal for newborn babies' skin to peel in the first 2 weeks of life. Your baby's skin is a barrier against infection, injury, and extreme temperatures. It is important to clean and moisturize your baby's skin.

- » Wash with gentle soap every other day to clean any leftover urine and stool. You do not need to bathe your baby every day because baths dry out the skin.
- » Clean the diaper area after bowel movements.
- » Moisturize with Vaseline or unscented lotion at least once a day, especially after bathing. Moisturize whenever the skin seems dry.
- » Do not use medicated ointments before checking with your baby's doctor first.

#### **My baby's lips seem dry. Can I give him water?**

Do not give water to babies under 4 months of age. They are hydrated with the milk they drink.

### Bellybutton Stump

#### **My baby's bellybutton sticks out when he cries, is that okay?**

Many newborn babies have this condition, called an umbilical hernia, which is caused by a gap in the stomach muscles. It is usually not harmful and will heal on its own, sometimes after 1 to 2 years. Do not bind your baby's belly in cloth or rope.







*“As long as your baby gains weight and does not vomit after every feed, there is no need to worry. If your baby throws up with every feed or there is blood, see the doctor right away.”*

#### **4. Digestive Issues**

##### **My baby does not have normal bowel movements.**

Every baby has a different bowel movement schedule. Most babies stool 2 to 5 times a day in the first week of life and then about once or twice a day as they get older. Breastfed babies have loose, seedy, yellow bowel movements after almost every feeding. Formula-fed babies have firmer stools, and their movements are less frequent. There are also babies who have a bowel movement every 2 to 3 days. As long as the stool is soft and yellow or green, it is normal. If the stool is watery, bloody, or hard like little stones, take your baby to the doctor right away. Bring a stool sample to show your baby's doctor.

##### **Why does my baby vomit frequently?**

Babies often spit up a bit of milk after feeding, especially when burping. This usually stops as your baby gets older. To help your baby throw up less:

- » Burp your baby often to get rid of gas in the stomach.
- » Do not lay your baby flat on his back right after feeding. Hold your baby upright or place him or her in a car seat for 20 to 30 minutes after feeding.
- » Give smaller amounts of milk, but feed more frequently.

##### **My baby hiccups a lot. Can I give him water?**

All babies hiccup often. There is no need for water or medicine to stop them. Hiccups will stop on their own.

## 5. Other Health Topics

### **How do I know if my baby has a fever?**

If your baby feels warm or is not acting normally (e.g., drinking less milk or crying more than usual), take your baby's rectal temperature with a digital thermometer. Digital thermometers are low-cost and can be found at drug stores. Mercury or ear thermometers are not safe for babies.

If your baby has a temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, your baby has a fever. Call your doctor right away and check with him or her before giving your baby any medicine or herbs.

### **Why does my baby have nasal congestion, sneezing, and coughing?**

Babies often become congested with mucus due to the small size of their nostrils. Since they cannot blow their noses, parents must use a bulb suction to remove the mucus. Sometimes saline drops can loosen the mucus and make suctioning easier. Suction often to help your baby breathe more easily.

### **Why does my baby cry so much? How can I comfort my baby?**

Babies cry to express their needs. When your baby cries, see if your baby is hungry or needs a diaper change. Your baby may also cry when tired. Help soothe your baby:

- Wrap your baby with a blanket.
- Hold your baby tightly on his or her side or stomach to make your baby feel safe.
- Make a “shhhhh” noise.
- Give your baby a pacifier or clean finger to suck on.

### **Should babies sleep on their back, side, or stomach?**

Babies should sleep on their back on a firm surface. Sleeping on their stomach or side can lead to suffocation or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. Remove all pillows, blankets, and stuffed animals from the crib.





CHARLES B. WANG  
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

**General Info Line / 諮詢熱線**  
(212) 226-8339

**Website / 網址**  
[www.cbwchc.org](http://www.cbwchc.org)

**268 Canal Street, New York, NY 10013**  
Internal Medicine / 內科 (212) 379-6998  
Obstetrics & Gynecology (OB/GYN) / 婦產科 (212) 966-0228

**125 Walker Street, 2/F, New York, NY 10013**  
Pediatrics / 兒科 (212) 226-3888  
Dental / 牙科 (212) 226-9339  
Teen Resource Center (TRC) / 青少年資源中心 (212) 226-2044

**131-72 40th Road, Flushing, NY 11354**  
Internal Medicine / 內科 (718) 587-1111  
Obstetrics & Gynecology (OB/GYN) / 婦產科 (718) 886-1287  
Dental / 牙科 (718) 587-1111

**136-26 37th Avenue, Flushing, NY 11354**  
Pediatrics / 兒科 (718) 886-1222

**137-43 45th Avenue, Flushing, NY 11355**  
Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, and Gynecology /  
內科、兒科及婦科 (929) 362-3006

**Health Education Department / 健康教育部**  
(212) 966-0461

**Social Work Department / 社工部**  
Manhattan / 曼哈頓 (212) 226-1661  
40th Rd., Flushing / 法拉盛40路 (718) 587-1109  
37th Ave., Flushing / 法拉盛37大道 (718) 661-6033  
45th Ave., Flushing / 法拉盛45大道 (718) 661-6033

**Need Health Insurance? We Can Help! / 協助申請健保**  
Manhattan / 曼哈頓 (212) 226-8339  
Queens / 皇后區 (718) 886-7355

The Charles B. Wang Community Health Center encourages electronic or print redistribution of this material for non-profit purposes, provided that you acknowledge this material as the Health Center's work product. Unauthorized, for profit redistribution is not allowed.

The content of this brochure has been reviewed by clinical staff. The content is not a substitute for professional medical advice. See your doctor if you have questions about a medical condition.

王嘉廉社區醫療中心鼓勵以非牟利性的電子信息或印刷品形式使用本資料，同時請注明本資料是由王嘉廉社區醫療中心編製。未經許可，不得以牟利為目的使用本資料。

這份資料的內容已由本中心的醫療人員審閱，資料的內容不能取代專業人員的醫療建議。如有任何關於醫療的問題，請與醫生聯繫。