New Parents

Anti-Worry Chart

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Answers To Common Concerns

Newborn Weight Loss
All babies lose a few ounces (up to 10%) of their birth weight during the first two to five days and most take two weeks to regain it. No need for you to even keep track. Wholly bodyfed babies lose a bit more than formula-fed babies do. By the time you leave the hospital the add-an-ounce trend will almost surely be well begun.

Amount of Milk...Do I have Enough?
At first the supply is small, but you can rest easy as it will improve. Once the first sleepy day or two have passed, your baby should seem to be hungry all the time. And he probably is since human milk is digested within a couple of hours of consumption. It is nursing that speeds up the action of the "machinery" that makes milk. If one breast/chest does not satisfy the baby, both will and the supply will be restored, or perhaps increased, in time for the next feeding. Remember, the size of a newborn's stomach on day 1 is like a marble, day 3 like a shooter marble, day 10 like a golf ball and the size of an adult's stomach is like a soft ball.

Fontanels
The dread of accidentally hurting your baby's head in those two places, where the skull bones have not yet fused together, is natural but not necessary. Though the name "soft spots" is often used, a really tough membrane is there for ample protection. There is no hazard in a brisk rubbing or an affectionate stroking over the head. You might even be able to see a beating pulse there.

Head Shape
Good news – a baby's head size and shape changes as he grows. A newborn may come with a lopsided head due to pressure from the trip through the birth canal, but it later rounds. And if a favorite sleeping position flattens baby's head a bit, this too will most likely round out when he is able to be up and around.

Baby Eyes
Darker-skinned babies most often are born with brown or darker eyes, which usually stay that color. Whereas nearly all fair-skinned babies are born with blue or gray eyes, which may gradually change color over the first 12 months. And as if that hazy look weren't enough, a newborn's eyes often seem to be crossed. Be relaxed, the fact is baby's still too young to be able to focus. Nerve connections between brain and eye muscles aren't complete. Gradually both vision and control develop and baby's eyes soon "stay put".

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Navel
The very fact that hospitals no longer put abdominal bands on new babies proves that the navel need not be worried about. Home care, until the cord drops off, as prescribed by the doctor. After that just water. By the way, normal navels are not all the same size or shape.

Genitals
Breasts/chest and genitals may be slightly enlarged in all genders, due to the influence of pregnancy hormones that have crossed the placenta. This swelling resolves within a week after birth. Some girls may even have a little menstrual discharge and/or bleeding.

Hands and Feet
Hands and feet often look mottled or slightly blue, and you may see white or red blotches on the baby due to the baby's immature circulatory system and unstable temperature. If you're concerned about your baby's circulation, check the inside of the bottom lip – if that's blue, talk to your pediatrician.

Downy Hair and Dry Skin
You have heard new baby's skin was red or mottled, but nobody ever told you there might be this fuzzy down on her skin. It's just how some babies come and it's particularly noticeable if she is a brunette. It's perfectly normal and rubs off or falls out after a while, leaving "skin like a baby's". The same is for dry skin. Slathering on moisturizer won't help because some of the outer layers of a baby's skin dries up and flakes off naturally in the first couple of weeks.

Hiccups
All new babies hiccup, especially after feedings. The noise may worry us but doesn't bother your baby. Hiccups, caused by a spasm of the diaphragm (big muscle between the chest and abdomen), are gradually outgrown as the baby's nervous system begins to take firmer command and work more smoothly. Drinking or sucking usually helps with getting rid of it.

Unfinished Bottle
Baby fails to drain the bottle - it's safe to jump to the conclusion that the baby was not as hungry as usual and no more than that. Appetite varies from feeding to feeding – "enough" at one may be too much or too little at another. A baby almost always "averages" the same amount a day.

Spitting Up
Even a little spitting up can look like a lot or too much. Some spilling over after meals is to be expected for several months. The main reason for this messy habit - baby's digestive tract lacks practice and control. But the only spitting up that doctors consider serious is real forceful vomiting.

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Time Between Feedings
You can take it for granted that food is what your baby needs if the “demand” comes two hours or longer after the last feeding began. You can also take it for granted that the baby is not hungry and won't “starve” even if a between meal sleep lasts five or even six hours as it sometimes may.

Fussy Spell
No one can tell what's behind all of the baby's cries. Many new babies "act up" once or twice a day for no apparent reason. He's not hungry, not wet, not too hot, or too cold. If your cuddling doesn't cure those cranky cries, try to remember: All babies have fussy moods we can't understand.

Sleeping Positions
One of the best ways to lower the risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) is to put your baby on her Back To Sleep, even for naps. Research shows that fewer babies die of SIDS on their backs. Many parents worry that their baby will choke on the spit up or vomit while sleeping on their backs. However, they automatically swallow or cough up such fluids and/or turn their head and doctors have found no increase in choking or other problems.

Baby’s Birthmarks
There are several different types of birthmarks:

“Stork bites” are flat, pink patches that are collections of blood vessels under the skin. They usually crop up on or around the forehead, nape, nose, or eyelids. They are normal but take about a year to fade.

Strawberry marks first appear as tiny red dots and may increase in size up until the end of the first year. They usually disappear by five years of age.

Slate gray nevi are blue-toned spots and found on the lower backs of babies with dark skin tones (such as African American, Asian, and some Mediterranean). These eventually fade. Some birthmarks, however, are permanent.

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