

GENERAL CARE

Positioning for Sleep

Because studies have shown that there is a greater risk for **SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome)** in infants sleeping on their abdomens, always place your baby on his back.

Bathing

Sponge bathe your baby until the umbilical cord falls off. Always support your baby in the bath. **Never leave a baby alone in his bath.** Use plain water without soap.

Eyes

A newborn's eyes often seem to be crossed. This is perfectly normal. The nerve connections between the brain and eye muscles are not completely mature at birth. Gradually, both vision and control develop and a baby's eyes soon "stay put." To clean your baby's eyelids, use a cotton ball dipped in cool water and gently swab the lids until they are clean.

Ears, Nose, and Mouth

Clean the external ear and nose with a moist cotton ball. Do not attempt to clean the inside of either the nose or ears. Do not insert a cotton applicator (Q Tip) in the ear canal or nose. Remember, "nothing smaller than an elbow goes in the ear." The baby's mouth may be wiped out with a warm washcloth twice a day.

Scalp

Your baby's scalp should be lathered gently with a mild baby shampoo. Work from front to back to keep soap out of his eyes. If you notice greasy scales (*cradle cap*), cover the area with Vaseline or baby oil and after 10 minutes shampoo and scrub the scales with an old toothbrush or washcloth. Do not be afraid of the soft spot. It is very durable and not easily damaged.

Nails

Carefully use baby nail scissors or emery board (*especially for wiggly babies*) for trimming. Try doing it when your baby is asleep. **NEVER** use nail clippers.

Skin

Most babies develop a bumpy red rash on the face, head or neck sometime during the first few weeks of life. This is transient, usually disappearing in 3 or 4 weeks. This rash (sometimes called baby "acne") requires no treatment. Infant skin is often dry and may peel for the first few weeks. You may wish to use a baby lotion (Baby Magic) or moisturizing cream (Eucerin). Your baby will love the massage.

Rashes

Rashes occur commonly in new babies. In most cases, these rashes are transient and have no major medical significance. The most common types are:

1. **Diaper rash** - this is usually caused by a combination of moisture, heat and irritation caused by stool and urine. It can be prevented by frequent cleansing and diaper changes. Often, leaving the area open to air for as long as is practical will help to clear it up. (This is easier in girls.) You can use Vaseline, Desitin, A & D ointment or Aquaphor cream.
2. **Milia** - white beads on the nose and chin. These are tiny blocked pores that will open up by themselves in a few weeks. No treatment is necessary.
3. **Heat rash** - red or pink pimples on areas of perspiration. Keep the room temperature comfortable and use lightweight clothing.
4. **"Stork bite"** (nevus flammeus) - these are flat red areas usually found on the eyelids, forehead, back of the head and nape of the neck. They have no medical significance usually fade with time.

Umbilical Cord (Belly-button or navel)

Keep the umbilical cord clean and dry. Using a cotton ball saturate the umbilical cord with rubbing alcohol after each diaper change. When the cord falls off after the cord falls off (about 10 days), there may be a slight oozing of blood for a few days but this is no cause to worry. If you should notice any foul smelling discharge, redness or swelling of the umbilical cord you should call our office.

Genitalia

If your infant boy is not circumcised, it is not necessary or desirable to retract the foreskin. No special cleansing of the genitalia is indicated for girl babies except the wiping out of stool and secretions that may accumulate between the large and small labia. Wipe from front to back.

Circumcision

If your baby boy is circumcised, the end of the penis may appear to be quite raw for a few days. Apply Vaseline to the end of the penis at each diaper change. This will prevent the raw surface from adhering to the diaper and permit rapid healing to take place. Watch for unusual swelling, redness or bleeding. Call the office if you have any questions about the appearance of the circumcised penis.