
Baby development: Your 1 week old

REVIEWED BY DR. SARA CONNOLLY, MD, FAAP, BUNDOO PEDIATRICIAN AND DR. JEN LINCOLN, MD, IBCLC, BUNDOO OB/GYN

Congratulations!

If you're like most new parents, you're in the middle of a whirlwind of new experiences and emotions right now, just days after **the arrival of your new baby**.

It's not uncommon for new parents to be simultaneously flooded with love and anxiety, excitement, and confusion about what's the "right" thing to do. And there seems like so much to worry about! There's everything from your own recovery to your million questions about caring for a newborn to handling your visitors in town for the big event.

But no worries! Bundoo is here to help. While it's impossible to cover everything you need to know about your newborn in one email, we've compiled a list of the most common questions and their answers for parents and their babies.

Recovering from giving birth

No two births are the same—even for the same mom—so your questions and concerns are unique to your situation. Whether your birth happened exactly according to your detailed **birth plan**, or circumstances changed in the birthing room and your obstetrics provider recommended a change, you likely have many questions about your own recovery, including:

1. How long will it take to recover from a tear or episiotomy? A cesarean section?
2. What are some postpartum red flags that I should watch out for?
3. How do I choose a doctor for my baby?
4. Should we circumcise our boy?
5. What kind of diapers are the best?
6. Will my baby be safe around my dog? What about my cat?
7. When is it safe to have sex again (or will I ever want to again)?
8. Why is my baby jaundiced?
9. Why is my baby's head shaped like that?
10. How do I care for the umbilical cord?

Don't neglect your own recovery

With so much going on, it can be easy to try pushing forward faster than your own body is ready to go. Whether you had a vaginal birth or a Cesarean section, birth is a challenging process for your body, and you'll be experiencing issues related to your own recovery for at least a little while.

Watch out for these **warning signs** that may signal a problem, and don't hesitate to call your doctor or midwife with any questions.

And don't forget those hormones! Throughout pregnancy, you dealt with skyrocketing levels of hormones that fluctuated constantly and caused all sorts of side effects. Now that your baby has been born, your hormone levels are dropping rapidly. This will bring on a whole new set of hormone-related symptoms, which can include night sweats, mood swings, and feelings of sadness. Some of this is normal—the “**baby blues**” can show up within a few days of birth and last a week or two—but if you are feeling strong feelings of despair, anxiety, or anger, or you're having thoughts that make you uncomfortable, it could be a sign of the more serious **postpartum depression**. You should contact your healthcare provider right away and seek treatment. The good news is that this condition can be successfully treated.

During these first few days and first week, make sure you're getting enough **sleep**, eating enough, and being gentle with yourself. These first few days are part of the incredible bonding process that began the moment your baby was born, and it's good for everyone if Mom is happy, rested (as much as possible), and on the mend.

Feeding your baby

For many new moms, feeding is a significant source of anxiety. Everyone has heard that “breast is best,” and the American Academy of Pediatrics does recommend **exclusive breastfeeding** for the first six months. Research has shown this has significant benefits for both Mom and baby. However, this doesn't mean it's always easy to get started breastfeeding or that you won't have questions, including things like, “Can my baby be allergic to my breast milk?” Luckily for you, we've compiled a list of all our breastfeeding articles, so you can quickly reference them when you have questions!

Fortunately, there are lots of resources to help moms get underway. If you have questions about breastfeeding, you can ask the healthcare provider who helped deliver your baby for a referral to a **lactation consultant** or some other form of breastfeeding counseling. Keep in mind that both you and your baby are learning a new skill, so like riding a bike, it's going to take practice!

Also, if you cannot breastfeed or choose not to, it's good to know that **formula** can provide everything your baby needs to thrive—and if you are still hoping to get some of the benefits of breast milk, there are other strategies you could try. For example, many moms with diagnosed **low milk supply** (which is actually less common than most people think) can supplement breast milk with formula. Or you could look into using **donated breast milk**.

Bundoo Pediatrician, Dr. Sara Connolly, coaches you through your first week at home with baby.

Reviewed by Dr. Sara Connolly, August 2019