

# Newborn Care: Common Health Concerns

Your baby's health will be checked right after birth and will continue to be checked during your stay at the hospital and at your baby's regular Pediatrician visits. During the hospital stay, your baby will have 3 newborn screening tests. The first test is a blood test that looks for rare but serious disorders that can be treated if detected early. You will get the results of this test shortly after your discharge. The second is a hearing screening. And the third is a screening for congenital heart defects. The results of the hearing and congenital heart screenings are known immediately.

Depending on where you live, these tests may be repeated soon after discharge at your Pediatrician's office or lab. A common newborn health concern is Jaundice, which appears as a yellow tint in the baby's skin. It is caused by a substance called bilirubin. Jaundice usually appears on the second or third day after birth, peaks and then goes away, disappearing before the end of the second week. If you notice your baby looks yellow or tan, call your baby's healthcare provider, and a test may be ordered.

Mild jaundice is considered harmless and occurs in about half of all full-term babies. But if the bilirubin levels are high, the child may be treated with phototherapy, your baby will be placed under special lights or laid on or wrapped in a small blanket which has fiber optic lights in it. This is often done in the hospital, but in some cases, it can be done at home. Every baby should have a healthcare visit soon after birth.

*"We're here for our appointment."*

*"Ok, and what is your Doctor's name?"*

At your appointment, your healthcare provider will check your baby's overall health and development.

*"Heart and lungs sound really well, really healthy."*

Your healthcare provider will probably tell you to limit your newborn's exposure to other people's children and to anyone who is sick for the first few weeks. Immunizations are very important for your child's health.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all newborns receive the Hepatitis B vaccine within the first 24 hours after birth. Other immunizations will be given at your baby's checkup at two months, again at four months, then at six months.

It is very important to get all of your child's immunizations on time. Immunizations protect both your baby and your community from many serious diseases; some that can be life-threatening, especially for a newborn. Follow your Pediatrician's recommendations for immunizations and keep a record of them.

You may want to ask your health care provider when to call for help. Call your healthcare provider if your baby has a temperature of one hundred point four degrees Fahrenheit or higher, or ninety-eight degrees Fahrenheit or lower.

*"If you're worried about your baby, your baby feels warm, even if you're not getting that temp, it still worth calling."*

When you do call, your health care provider may ask you how you took your baby's temperature. This can be done either in the rectum or under the armpit. Never attempt to take an infant's temperature orally.

Other times to call your healthcare provider include when: Your baby's breathing changes; Your baby is vomiting; Her skin has turned yellowish; He refuses to eat through two or more feedings in a row; Your baby

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has had watery diarrhea three to four times; Your baby has not had a wet diaper for eight hours; Or when she is unusually sleepy and difficult to wake up.

It is also a good idea to keep a list of important numbers by the phone, like your health care provider, your baby's health care provider, poison control, and family and friends to contact in an emergency.

If you notice anything unusual, or are concerned about your baby's health, don't hesitate to call your baby's health care provider. And be sure to keep appointments for your baby's regular checkups... to make sure your newborn is healthy and developing well.