

# TAKING YOUR BABY HOME



## A Guide for Parents and Caregivers

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- Eating
- Sleeping
- Newborn Health
- Visiting Your  
Pediatric Professional

## PREFACE

Every child deserves a healthy start in life. For almost a decade, the Johnson & Johnson Pediatric Institute, L.L.C. (JJPI) has been devoted to improving the lives of children and their families. From their first breaths through their early years, children are challenged to survive and thrive in the world. Every country, every family and every child face unique obstacles to the promise of a healthy life. At the forefront is JJPI — continually addressing the challenges and priorities in children's health.

A commitment to mothers and their babies has been at the heart of Johnson & Johnson for over 100 years. Reinforced by the Johnson & Johnson Credo that states, "We believe our first responsibility is to the doctors, nurses and patients, to mothers and fathers and all others who use our products

and services," JJPI was established in 1998. It's mission is to save babies' lives and contribute to a healthy environment for children.

Collaborating with worldwide leaders from government, medicine, nongovernmental organizations and industry, JJPI identifies the needs of local children and their families.

With our partners, we develop high-impact educational programs to:

- Ensure mothers have safe and healthy pregnancies
- Improve care for babies – from birth through the early years

Resources for professionals and parents is a vital part of the Johnson & Johnson Pediatric Institute's programming. We hope you find the following educational material a valuable resource.

*Johnson & Johnson* PEDIATRIC INSTITUTE  
L.L.C.

# TAKING YOUR BABY HOME

## A Guide for Parents and Caregivers

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# TAKING YOUR BABY HOME

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## INTRODUCTION



Taking your baby home for the first time is an important moment for everyone in a new family. Many parents feel thrilled and excited when their baby comes home at the start of their lifetime together. Along with the excitement, many parents also feel a little concerned about leaving the protection of the hospital or birthing center and becoming responsible for all the things their newborn needs. Fortunately, most parents quickly become more confident while learning how to care for their new baby.

The first days at home with your baby will be filled with new activities, sights, sounds and scents. All the

changes that come with being a new parent, some big and some small, will probably take a little while to get used to. During this time you may find that friends and relatives offer advice and help (although sometimes they can be too helpful!) and you may find strength and inspiration in many sources. For many mothers the simplest advice is often the best advice – try to get as much rest as possible. When you are well-rested, you will be better able to care for your new baby, as well as yourself.

Your new baby will probably spend most of her first days at home eating and sleeping. When she needs to eat

or sleep – or just needs to be held – your baby will let you know, usually by crying. But crying is only a part of the way your baby “speaks” to you – when she looks calmly into your eyes, or smiles, or even falls asleep on your arm, your baby is telling you that she loves you and is enjoying your time together.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rosemary White-Traut". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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# TAKING YOUR BABY HOME

## Feeding

In the first few weeks of life, newborn babies need to be fed during both the day and the night. Your baby will let you know he is hungry by crying, often with a cry that has a special “I’m hungry!” sound. At first, it is best to feed your baby when he is hungry – not on a rigid schedule as your grandmother or mother may have done. This is because only your baby really knows how much food he needs and when he needs it! Eventually the two of you will develop feeding times that work well for both of you.



Many parents wonder if their baby is eating enough. You can usually tell if your baby is getting enough nutrition if he or she:

- Gains weight steadily
- Has regular, soft stools
- Wets the diaper 6-8 times per day
- Seems generally happy and content, especially when feeding

## Burping

Your baby will need to burp if she swallows a little air while feeding. Initially you can try burping your baby half way through a feeding and then when she is full. Soon you will discover how much help she usually needs, some babies need to be burped more often and some not at all.

You can help your baby burp by sitting her on your lap (or placing her over your shoulder) and gently but firmly rubbing her back with your

hand. If your baby does not burp within 2-3 minutes, she probably does not need to burp at all. If she still seems uncomfortable you should try other things to make her feel better, perhaps a diaper change, holding her, or allowing her to nap.

## Hiccups

Hiccups occur occasionally in most babies and most of the time they go away by themselves without bothering the baby very much at all. If your baby gets hiccups half way through a feeding, allow him to finish, because sucking can actually help stop the hiccups. If hiccups occur at the end of a feeding, try burping your baby, then change him and put him down for a nap as you usually would – the hiccups will usually go away.

## Spitting Up

Sometimes babies spit up a little milk when they hiccup. Even without hiccups, sometimes babies dribble, spit up or vomit small amounts of milk. For most babies this is perfectly normal, as long as your baby has a good appetite, enjoys feeding and is gaining weight.



## Stools

New parents are often concerned about their baby's stools – What's normal? What's not? What color should they be? The following is a brief guide to what you may find in your baby's diaper.

- The first stool passed by a new baby is called meconium and is greenish-black and sticky.
- After your baby starts feeding and digesting the stools change.
- Breastfed babies less than 6 weeks old have stools that are a yellow-mustard color. It is normal for them to have 8-10 stools per day.
- After 6 weeks, breastfed babies may not have a stool for 4-7 days.

This may be normal and does not mean your baby is constipated.

- Formula-fed babies have stools that are usually a greenish-yellow color and much firmer than those of a breastfed baby. A formula-fed baby will usually have at least one stool per day.

If your baby has less than 1 stool per day or if they are dry and hard, your baby is probably constipated and you should ask your healthcare professional for advice.

## Sleeping

You should always place your baby on his back when it is time to sleep, even during a nap. Research now shows that fewer babies die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) when they sleep on their backs. In the early 1990s, before healthcare providers began to recommend sleeping on the back as the best way to reduce SIDS, more than 5,000 babies in the United States died from SIDS every year. But now, as more babies are put to sleep on their backs, the number of babies who die from SIDS is under 3,000 each year.

If you have questions about your baby's sleeping or position during sleep, you should talk to your healthcare provider.

## Crying or Colic

All new babies cry from time to time. It is an important way for them to tell you that they need something – to be fed, changed, put down for a nap or just held and cuddled. Many babies cry a little bit just before falling asleep, even after they've been cared for.

On the other hand, excessive or severe crying that will not stop despite your best attempts at comforting and calming may be a sign that your baby needs to be seen by your pediatric healthcare professional. Babies that





cry excessively may have a condition known as colic – which is simply excessive crying that won't stop easily. Colic usually goes away when babies are 3-4 months old.

Colic can be especially frustrating for parents when they can't stop their baby's crying. And because colic often occurs at night, both parents and babies lose sleep. To help reduce the amount of crying, your healthcare professional can provide guidance and suggest special soothing, handling or feeding techniques. If your baby has colic and you find yourself losing sleep night after night, try to nap when your baby naps – it may help keep you refreshed enough to care for your baby when she needs you.

Remember, any excessive crying or irritability should be evaluated by a pediatric healthcare professional.

## Newborn Health

### Skin Problems

Rashes and blemishes appear on many babies – this is normal for most newborns. Minor skin problems will generally disappear without treatment, especially if your baby is happy and

feeding well. However if you are concerned or if your baby appears uncomfortable or irritated, call your healthcare professional.

### Jaundice

Over half of all normal newborn babies will have a yellow tint on their skin, gums and eyes known as neonatal jaundice. This common condition occurs when a baby's liver is not quite mature enough to do its job. In the hospital nursery, treatment is simple – the baby is put under a special light that helps break down the yellow color. By the time you take your new baby home, his color should be normal. However, if a yellow tint develops or persists, please seek professional help.

### Stuffy Nose

Babies often sound stuffy when they breathe because their noses and nasal passages are smaller than adults. And from time to time, a newborn baby will sneeze when she needs to clear her nose. If you live in a dry climate, sometimes stuffiness can be caused by dry air and prevented or relieved by using a humidifier.

Stiffness and occasional sneezing are perfectly normal unless your baby has trouble breathing or is unable to feed properly. If your baby has difficulty breathing, seek professional help immediately. If you have questions about stiffness that are not an emergency, please bring them up at your baby's next check-up.

### **Swollen Breasts**

Sometimes baby boys and girls may have red swollen breasts. A little swelling is perfectly normal and usually disappears in a few days. This swelling is caused by mom's hormones that passed into her baby before birth.

### **Red, Swollen Genital Parts**

It is normal for both newborn boys and girls to have red and swollen genitals. Little girls may have a red swollen vulva, and may even have a white or pink stained discharge. Little boys may have a red swollen scrotum and testes. These are also caused by maternal hormones and will soon disappear.

### **Circumcision**

If you have chosen to have your baby boy circumcised, you should follow your doctor's specific instructions for bathing and caring for your baby until healing is complete. If your baby is not circumcised, it is not necessary to stretch his foreskin while bathing or cleansing.

### **Visiting Your Pediatric Healthcare Professional**

You will probably be asked to bring your baby in for a check-up when she is around 2 weeks old. At approximately 6 weeks, your baby will have a thorough physical examination and be weighed and measured. At this time and all others, you can discuss any concerns or



questions that you may have with your pediatric healthcare professional.

There are many reasons to call your pediatric healthcare professional (your doctor, nurse or physician assistant) before or after scheduled check-ups. Most parents know when their baby is not feeling well, but the following symptoms should alert you that something is wrong and you should seek professional assistance. It is also a good idea to follow your own



instincts if you suspect something is not right with your baby.

## Some Reasons to Call a Healthcare Professional

### Temperature

- Red, flushed appearance
- Irritable
- Listless

### Diarrhea

- Watery stools with mucus
- With vomiting

### Vomiting

- Excessive, persistent or forceful vomiting

### Not Feeding Well

- Noticeable changes in feeding patterns
- Not hungry or is reluctant to feed

### Skin Rashes

- Red rashes
- Severe diaper rash
- Oozing or crusted sores
- Blisters

### Yellow Skin

- Prolonged jaundice after leaving hospital

## The First Days at Home

### Quiet Time With Your Baby

The special quiet moments moms and dads share with their new babies are very important. When you spend time caring for your baby or holding her and relaxing together, you let your baby know she is loved and protected. This intimate caring helps you develop a close and secure relationship with each other.

*Take time to love, cuddle and talk to your baby.*

At this early age, touching, holding and talking to your baby are very important for both of you. Take the time to love and talk to your baby, as well as cuddle and massage her, to help create a loving family bond. Always remember that you can't spoil a newborn by holding her too much.

### Quiet time for mom

Every new mom occasionally feels like she needs a break for a little quiet time of her own. And new mothers deserve it, so it's perfectly normal to ask for help so that you can have a



few moments to yourself – to take a walk or a quiet bath or to read a book or even nap.

### Limit Distractions

The first days with your new baby can be a little overwhelming, and sometimes it may seem that everyone you know wants to stop by or talk on the phone. Although they mean well, all the visitors and callers can distract you from the special care you give your baby. They should understand and you should realize that it is your responsibility to provide the best care for your baby – and sometimes that means limiting the number of visitors and other distractions. Simply learn to say “No” to whatever feels too much for you and your baby.

## Support

It is important to share your experiences as a parent with others. This provides support and encouragement for you. It can also be a learning experience for you and your baby.

Helpers can include relatives and close friends, especially those with child care experience and knowledge you can trust.

Always remember that your most important helper may be your partner. Working together in the daily care of your baby is an ideal way to bring you all closer together as a family.

## Books

It is a good idea to have read at least one book on infant care. In addition there may be a support group for new mothers or fathers in your community that will enable you to discuss your experiences and get help with any problems you may have.

Whether you get support from family, friends or helpful books, remember to trust your own feelings and instincts.





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**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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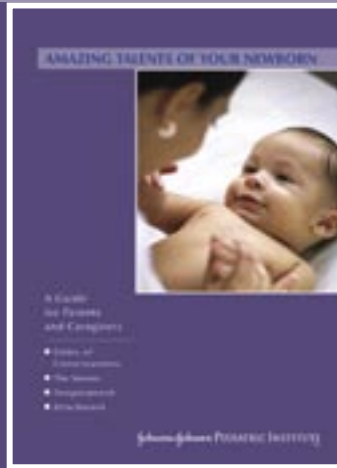
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## NEWBORN CARE: Other Resources



**Amazing Talents of the Newborn**  
*Professional Monograph*



**Amazing Talents of Your Newborn**  
*A Parent's Guide*

The materials available in our Newborn Care Program provide professionals and parents with guidelines and suggestions for infancy. For related information during pregnancy, please see materials in our Pregnancy Program. This unique program is supported by research that is reviewed in these materials and translated for practical application. For downloadable versions, see [www.JJPI.com](http://www.JJPI.com).