

# NEWBORN CARE EDUCATION

## Good Hand Washing

- Hands are the greatest carrier of germs. Wash hands or use hand sanitizer before touching your baby and after diaper changes.

## Spitting Up and Gagging

- Squeeze and then insert the bulb syringe into your baby's mouth between the cheek and gum to suction secretions. Do not suction toward the back of his or her throat.
- Always suction mouth before nose if secretions are present in both.

## Sleeping Safety

- Always place your baby on his or her back to sleep for both naptime and nighttime. Sleeping on their backs decreases their risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, or SIDS, by more than 50 percent.
- The safest place for your baby to sleep is in the room where you sleep in his or her own crib, bassinet or play yard that meets current safety standards but NOT in your bed.
- Never put your baby to sleep on a pillow, comforter, waterbed, featherbed, sofa or beanbag chair. Your baby must sleep on a firm mattress that fits the crib tightly and is free of gaps or spaces between the mattress and the crib side.
- Remove all unnecessary items from your infant's sleep area. No toys or stuffed animals, bumper pads, wedges and/or sleep positioners, and loose items including blankets/loose bedding, comforters or pillows.
- To keep your baby warm, use an infant sleep sack or wearable blanket that zips around your baby and can't ride up over his or her face.
- Don't let your baby become overheated. Keep the temperature as it feels comfortable to you.
- Never smoke around your baby. Babies who are exposed to secondhand smoke are 2.5 times more likely to suffer from SIDS.
- Keep monitor cords and other cords out of the infant's reach, as these can pose a strangulation hazard.
- Talk to your pediatrician about sleep issues your baby may have. Advice may be different today from when your relatives or friends had babies.
- Your baby may be placed on his or her stomach for "Tummy Time" when awake and ONLY while supervised.
- All sleep safety information needs to be shared with EVERYONE who cares for your baby.

## Bathing

- Have all supplies within reach.
- Pick a draft-free area.
- Sponge bathe your baby until the cord falls off. Every other day is adequate. Make sure to clean and dry crevices and folds. Use mild soap and shampoo.
- Never turn your back on baby or leave alone in bath. Drowning can occur even in very little water.
- Do not use powder; it can irritate your baby's lungs and sinuses.

- Do not put lotion on your baby's hands.
- Never put cotton swabs in their ears or nose.

### **Cord Care**

- The cord falls off in about 1 to 4 weeks. Do not pick at or cut the cord.
- Keep cord clean and dry.
- Call your baby's doctor if there is bleeding, swelling, redness or drainage from the cord.

### **Finger Nails**

- Do not cut nails for 1 to 2 weeks after birth.
- Cut while your baby is asleep.
- Use blunt end nail scissors.
- Cut nails in a well-lit area.
- Cut straight across.
- Smooth nail corners with an emery board.

### **Diaper Changes**

- Have supplies within reach.
- Never leave your baby or turn your back.
- Wipe and clean genital area from front to back. Use wipes that are alcohol free and fragrance free. Plain soap and water may also be used. Do not use powders or lotions as these can cause a yeast infection.
- Gently wipe between folds. For girls, do not try to wipe away white substance. It will gradually clean away. Girls may have a thick white, pinkish or bloody discharge from the vagina in the first weeks after birth. This is normal and is due to mother's hormones.
- Expect about 6 wet diapers and 3 to 4 bowel movements per day. Stool color and consistency should change as the first week passes.

### **Circumcision Care**

- At diaper change, clean penis if needed, by dripping clean water from a saturated wash cloth.
- Apply Vaseline to circumcision site for about 7 days to prevent sticking. Do this with each diaper change. If diaper sticks, do not pull. Loosen by dripping warm water to the area that is stuck.
- The tip of the penis may be red and develop yellow crust in some spots. Do not try to remove crust as it is part of the healing process.
- Call your baby's doctor if there is unusual redness, swelling, bleeding or drainage from circumcision.

### **Crying and Colic**

- Babies may cry because they are hungry, wet, soiled, tired, in pain or simply want to be held. You cannot "spoil" your baby by holding him/her.
- Colic is uncontrollable crying that can last for hours. The baby is tense, fists are clenched and legs are drawn up.
- It is unknown what causes colic. Remain calm and remember it is a temporary condition that will diminish by the time your baby is 3 to 4 months of age. Never shake your baby.

## Taking Your Baby's Temperature

- Take temperature under the arm making sure thermometer is not touching clothing.
- Never take your baby's temperature in the mouth.

## Jaundice

- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin) can occur when there is a buildup of a yellow substance called bilirubin in your baby's blood. Bilirubin comes from the normal breakdown of red blood cells.
- Babies get rid of bilirubin through bowel movements.
- Higher than usual levels of jaundice can happen if your baby is not getting enough milk and not having enough bowel movements.
- Jaundice can be dangerous if levels are too high. All babies are checked before discharge. Levels normally peak around day 4.
- Your baby's doctor will treat jaundice if necessary.

## Car Seat Safety

- It is Louisiana state law that a baby must be restrained in an approved child safety seat while riding in a motor vehicle beginning from the ride home from the hospital.
- The car seat must face backwards until your baby reaches the approved weight to face forward. The rear center seat is the safest.
- Never place your child in front seat or near an airbag.

## Reasons to Call Your Baby's Doctor

- Swelling or drainage from the eyes.
- Your baby's belly is swollen and/or hard.
- Temperature that is greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Temperature that is less than 97.4 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Baby refuses to eat or vomits feedings.
- Baby has not had a bowel movement in 24 hours and his or her belly is distended and/or firm.
- Call 911 if your baby becomes dusky or bluish in color or has breathing difficulties.