

Some advice about newborns...

1. Protect yourselves to protect your baby:

Tdap
FLU

We recommend that parents immunize themselves against "the flu" (*influenza*) and against whooping cough (*pertussis*). Everyone in your home should get a flu shot or *flumist* and tetanus-pertussis vaccine known as *Tdap*. The *Tdap* vaccine (brand names *Boostrix* or *Adacel*) can be given to adults. Parents of our 10 year olds know it is required to enter 6th grade. Younger children receive a similar vaccine known as *DPT*, but the protection against whooping cough does not last. Both "flu" and whooping cough are dangerous to young infants. Protecting yourselves protects your baby!

2. Now is the time to quit smoking:



We're not yelling at you. We know cigarette smoking is a tough habit to quit. It is an addiction, but we can help! Talk to us about nicotine gum, nicotine patches, or other prescriptions to help you quit. Just do it for your baby! You are going to be your infant's role model in life. Be a non-smoking parent for your health and your baby's.

Until you do quit, you *must* smoke out of the home and change your clothes afterwards. Smoke gets into an infant's lungs if there is smoke anywhere in the home. The risk of sudden infant death is higher when there is smoke in the home!

3. Nursing infants need extra Vitamin D:



The American Academy of Pediatrics has doubled the recommended daily intake of vitamin D for infants and children (from 200 to 400 international units). Few breastfed infants are getting enough Vitamin D to meet these guidelines. This is the only nutrient which breast milk lacks. We recommend one dropperful daily of vitamin D drops. You can purchase these over the counter (*D-vi-sol* or *Tri-vi-sol*). Infant formula has vitamin D added, particularly "newborn" formulas.

4. Fever, 100.4 or higher, is an emergency:



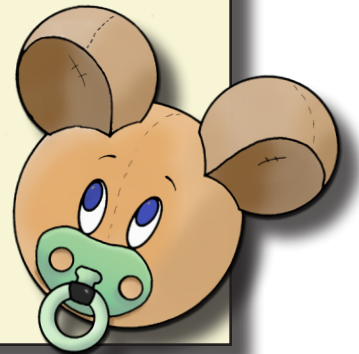
The immune system of a newborn is underdeveloped. Until the age of two to three months, fever can be a sign of a serious infection. Normal temperature can be up to 100.3. Fever is considered 100.4 F or higher (38 degrees celsius) using a rectal thermometer. Call us immediately if fever occurs, as your baby will need evaluation in the emergency room. We don't ask you to take temperatures on well appearing babies, only if your baby seems warm or sick. Ear thermometers, temporal artery thermometers are fine for older children, but not accurate enough for newborns.

5. Back to Sleep, Tummy for Play:

It is almost twenty years now since we began asking parents to put their infants on their backs when sleeping. Tragic deaths in this country from *SIDS* (*sudden infant death*) have since decreased by over 50%, striking about one infant in every two thousand. The period of greatest risk occurs between ages one and five months, although our recommendations apply to the entire first year of life. We don't know for sure what causes *SIDS*, but some babies seem to have an immature "arousal center" in their brains. Infants are **not** at increased risk of choking when they sleep on their backs. These are the steps parents should take to minimize their babies' risk of *SIDS*:



- ❑ Side sleeping is no longer recognized as a safe alternative to back sleeping. Side sleeping cushions or wedges are not recommended.
- ❑ Room smoke greatly increases a baby's risk of *SIDS*. Pregnant women should not smoke, and no-one should smoke anywhere in a home where an infant lives!
- ❑ Don't let your baby sleep on very soft mattresses or cushions. Keep "stuffed animals" out of the crib. These can all lead to suffocation.
- ❑ Infants should sleep in their own crib or bassinet, **not** their parents' bed. (Parents may roll over the infant's airway while a parent is asleep.) Keeping the crib in your bedroom for the first four months may help decrease *SIDS* risk
- ❑ Babies should be kept comfortable, but not overheated. A "hot" nursery may *increase* the risk of *SIDS*!
- ❑ Breast feeding is encouraged and decreases *SIDS* risk.
- ❑ Pacifiers can be introduced after breastfeeding is well established. Recent studies suggest that pacifier use may reduce the risk of *SIDS* in the first five months. But we suggest stopping pacifier use after the age of six months.



6. Prevent flattening of the head:

Positional molding, or "flattened head", is much more common when a baby sleeps on his back. The plates of the skull are not fused at birth. When an infant continually rests his head in one position, gravity will shift the skull plates and cause flattening. Once a portion of the skull is flattened, a baby will prefer to sleep on it.

Alternate the position of your baby's head during sleep (some nights facing right and other nights facing left). Change the position of the infant in the crib so exciting activity is on different sides. If one side of the head is already flattened, preferentially place the rounded side against the mattress. During periods of time when the baby is awake and being observed, have some "tummy time". Mild head flattening will not be noticeable when the baby gets older and hair grows in. The use of helmets has not been shown to be more effective.

