



Bringing Home Baby

A Guide to Support Families in the First Few Months



Brought to you by





Thank you for allowing us to be part of your family journey. Babies don't come with an instruction manual, and having questions is completely normal. That's why we're here to provide you with support and connect you with helpful resources, ensuring that you have all the tools you need to be the best parent you can be. If you need additional support or have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.



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My Health

The 6-week postpartum visit is critical to ensure healing and recovery, both physically and emotionally. Nearly every bodily function is affected by pregnancy. Postpartum check-ups give your medical professional an opportunity to check that you're recovering.

Here is a list of questions you can ask your medical professional. Write down any additional questions you may have on page 17.

Note: *Not everything in this section is going to be applicable to all parents and caregivers. Whether you are a mother, a father, an adoptive parent, a trans parent, or any other type of parent or caregiver, we are here to support you.*

Every parent has their own unique needs, and we encourage you to ask the questions that are important to you.

My Health

- What do I need to pay attention to about my own health? When should I go to the emergency room or urgent care?



My Mood

- Why am I crying so much? Or, why am I so irritable?
- How do I know if what I'm feeling is baby blues or something else?

My Body

- What can I do to help my pelvic floor recover? Should I consider pelvic floor physical therapy?
- Is my bleeding normal?
- Do I have abdominal muscle separation? If so, what should I do?
- When can I exercise again?
- What do I need to know about birth control or when it's safe to have another pregnancy?
- What are my options for birth control?



My Relationships

- When can I have sex again? How can I talk to my partner about waiting if I'm not ready? What do I do if sex hurts or if it's something I'm just not interested in?
- My relationship feels different. Is there someone I or we can talk to?

My Breastfeeding/Chestfeeding

- I am having trouble with _____ related to breastfeeding or chestfeeding (sore nipples, clogged ducts, etc.). What can I do?
- Is it safe to start my medications again and still breastfeed or chestfeed?



Infant Health

Well-child visits are a partnership between you and your pediatrician in making sure your baby is healthy and thriving. Pediatricians can track your baby's overall health and help prevent any further issues.

In well-child visits, pediatricians track your baby's growth, do a complete head-to-toe physical exam, conduct development screening tests, and help with what's coming next for your baby's growth. It's also an opportunity to discuss any concerns about your child's health.



Tips to Make Well-Child Visits a Success

- **Make a list of questions before you come to the visit.** Ask your family and any caregivers to help come up with questions. Here are some to get you started:
 - » How can I be supporting my baby's development at this stage?
 - » If needed, when can I give my baby over-the-counter medications?
 - » When should I call you, and how can I reach you when the clinic is closed?
 - » What do I need to pay attention to about my baby's health, and when should we go to the emergency room or urgent care?
- **Discuss your feeding plan.** For example, if you are breastfeeding, how long do you want to continue? If you are using formula, do you need support to ensure you have what you need?
- Newborn sleep can change rapidly. This can be normal. Make sure to **talk about how much your baby sleeps**, where they sleep, and any changes as your baby grows.
- Make sure to **raise any concerns you have**. Write down any other questions you want to address on page 17.



When to Contact the Pediatrician

- **Fever** greater than 100.4° in a child younger than 60 days (2 months) old
- **Congestion** that is making feeding difficult for baby
- **Excessive spitting up:** babies often spit up, but forceful and large quantities of spit up are not normal
- Vomit or stools that **contain blood**
- **Abnormal feeding patterns** such as not eating 8 or more times a day, refusing to feed, or a sleepy baby that cannot be awakened enough to feed
- Odor, redness, bleeding, or drainage around **umbilical cord**
- **Distended, firm abdomen** accompanied by increased baby crying
- **Eye redness** or yellow drainage from eyes
- **White patches on tongue** or inside of cheeks or gums; this may be thrush
- **Diaper rash** with red or bleeding skin
- **Irregular stools** that are hard and ball-like; this may indicate constipation
- Don't hesitate to **contact the nurse advice line** if you have any questions or concerns! They want you to call so they can give you over-the-phone recommendations or schedule a time for your baby to come in to get assessed. Find this number in the list of resources at the end of this guidebook.





When to Go to the Emergency Department or Call 911

- **Difficulty breathing**
 - » Breathing faster than 60 breaths per minute: babies have irregular breathing patterns so you must check the breathing rate over a full minute, ideally when baby is not crying
 - » Struggling to breathe: baby's nostrils are flaring or you can see pulling in of the ribs when breathing
 - » Unusual sounds such as wheezing, grunting, or whistling when breathing
 - » Skin or lips that look purple or gray
- **Severe dehydration:** mouth is dry, no wet diapers, or sunken fontanel (soft spot on top of the head)
- **Rhythmic jerking of arms and legs** that persists even when you are gently holding the arms or legs. This is not the Moro reflex! This may be a seizure.
- Baby is **floppy and difficult to wake** or arouse
- **Any injury** that baby may have sustained from a fall

References:

<https://www.stanfordchildrens.org/en/topic/default?id=newborn-warning-signs-90-P02674>

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/Pages/When-to-Call-Emergency-Medical-Services-EMS.aspx>



Infant Crying

Crying is normal and it's how babies communicate what they need. At times, their crying can be upsetting. Here are a few tips to support baby and caregiver.



Tips to Cope

- **Skin-to-skin contact:** Placing your baby (with only a diaper on) directly on your chest, skin-to-skin, can help calm their cries and ease any stress they may be experiencing.
- **Swaddling:** Wrap your baby snugly in a blanket. Swaddling can often help a baby feel safe and secure, which may lead to fewer tears.
- **Movement:** During a long crying spell, try holding your baby while walking, rocking, or swaying.
- **Warm bath:** If bath time is typically a soothing experience for your baby, try bathing them in lukewarm water when they are upset.
- **Fresh air:** Get outdoors with your baby. Sometimes a combination of a change of scenery and fresh air can help calm a baby when they are crying. Go for a walk or sit on a blanket.
- **Physical needs:** Check all of your baby's physical cues. Do they have a fever, need a fresh diaper or a burp, or could they be hungry?
- **Take a break:** If you find that the soothing techniques are not easing your baby's cries, and you're feeling frustrated or upset (which is normal!), set your baby down in a safe place and walk away. Take some time to calm down before returning to your baby and repeating the techniques above.
- **Ask for specific help** from family and friends.
- **Call your pediatrician** to discuss your concerns.
- **Never shake a baby.**

The Period of PURPLE Crying

PURPLE crying is a stage that some babies go through when they seem to cry for long periods of time and resist soothing. This can begin at about 2 weeks of age and continue until about 3-4 months of age. Your baby may find it hard to settle or calm down no matter what you do for them. It's okay to put your baby in a safe place, like on their back in a crib, and take a break. Never ever shake a baby.

To find out more about the Period of PURPLE Crying, visit <http://purplecrying.info/>.

Safe Sleep

Ideally, when your baby is asleep, they should be placed **ALONE**, on their **BACK**, and in a **CRIB**.

This is known as the **ABCs of Safe Sleep**.



This is the best option for safe sleep!

Dos & Don'ts of Safe Sleep

✓ **DO** place your baby on their back for all sleep times—naps and at night.

✓ **DO** use a firm, flat surface, such as a mattress in a safety-approved crib, covered by a fitted sheet.

✓ **DO** keep your baby's sleep area (for example, a crib or bassinet) in the same room where you sleep.

✓ **DO** keep the room at a comfortable temperature. If your baby is sweating or their chest feels hot, they may be overheated.

✓ **DO** find your own way to stay awake while feeding your baby.

✗ **DON'T** bed-share. Put your baby to bed in their own crib or bassinet.

✗ **DON'T** put your baby to sleep on soft surfaces, like a waterbed, sofa, soft mattress, or cushion.

✗ **DON'T** use soft bedding such as blankets, pillows, bumper pads, or soft toys in your baby's sleep area.

✗ **DON'T** let your baby sleep in a carrier, sling, car seat, or stroller. If your baby falls asleep in one, take them out and put them in their crib as soon as you can.

✗ **DON'T** smoke, drink, or use drugs.



8 Rules for Safer Sleep

If you don't always practice the ABCs of Safe Sleep—and there could be numerous reasons for this—here's a list of eight rules to follow to reduce the risk of harm. Meet all eight for safer bedsharing.



1. No smoking in the home or outside



5. Baby on back and face up



2. Sober adults: no alcohol, no drowsy medications



6. No sweat: baby in light clothing, no swaddling



3. Breastfeeding day and night



7. Safe surface: no soft mattress, no extra pillows, no toys, no tight or heavy covers. Clear of strings and cords. Gaps firmly filled by rolled towels or baby blankets.



4. Healthy baby who is full term



8. The C-position “cuddle curl” is the optimal position

Child Development

As your little one develops, **resources and support can be hard to find.**

Here are some good places to get you started!



Child care can be hard to find. For support in finding quality child care near you, visit **Colorado Shines** at <https://www.coloradoshines.com/>. You can also visit the **Colorado Department of Early Childhood** for more information: <https://cdec.colorado.gov/>.



Parents and caregivers like you are the foundations for children's healthy development. You keep them healthy, provide learning opportunities, and help them face challenges big and small. **Sesame Street in Communities** is here to support you in that huge and all-important effort. Here you'll find tons of multimedia tools in both English and Spanish designed for children from birth to six, a period when brains are developing rapidly and your nurturing interaction makes a lasting difference. <https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/>



Bright by Text is here for families when you need them most. They share helpful tips, activities, and events based on your child's age and your location. <https://brightbytext.org/>



Milestones matter! In **CDC's Milestone Tracker App**, track your child's milestones from age 2 months to 5 years with easy-to-use illustrated checklists; get tips from CDC for encouraging your child's development; and find out what to do if you are ever concerned about how your child is developing. Available in English and Spanish.

From birth to age 5, your child should reach milestones in how they play, learn, speak, act, and move. Photos and videos in this app illustrate each milestone and make tracking them for your child easy and fun! <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones-app.html>





Building Strong Families

Taking care of yourself and being aware of how you are feeling is an important step in building a strong family. Take notice when you are starting to feel overwhelmed or frustrated, and have a plan ready for how you can take a break or slow down. This could include going for a walk, taking deep breaths, or calling a friend.



Caring for your baby as they grow can look a lot of different ways. Playing with your baby, telling them you love them, reading to them, and giving them snuggles are all ways you can connect with your baby. Celebrate one positive thing you do with your baby every day.

Being a caregiver is hard work sometimes. Asking for help from a partner, family members, friends, or community agencies is a sign of strength. You are not alone. Joining a parenting group can also be a great way to meet parents and caregivers with babies and build your support system.



DID YOU KNOW?

The 5 Protective Factors are five areas that families can focus on to help build strong families. By focusing on building the 5 Protective Factors, families can create a strong foundation for their children to grow and thrive. **Learn more at FamilyConnectsColorado.org.**

Appointment Tracking

Follow-up visits with your medical professional are critical to ensure that you're recovering and that your baby is healthy and thriving. Keep track of your appointments here!

When you're at your appointment, be sure to refer to any questions that you've written down on the next page.

My Visits

My visit is on _____ with _____ at _____.

My visit is on _____ with _____ at _____.

My visit is on _____ with _____ at _____.

My Baby's Visits

My baby's visit is on _____ with _____ at _____.

My baby's visit is on _____ with _____ at _____.

My baby's visit is on _____ with _____ at _____.

My Numbers

Your Provider Phone Line: _____

Your Baby's Pediatrician Phone Line: _____

Nurse Line: _____

Resources

Having a baby can be life changing in many ways, but you are not alone. It's normal to feel a range of emotions: overwhelmed, confused, excited, exhausted, joyful, and sometimes guilty all at the same time! Asking for help is a sign of strength, and—from our standpoint—it's completely normal and expected. Family Connects Colorado can be a resource to help build your network.

Please reach out with any questions or concerns, and we can work together to find the right support. **Contact us at info@FamilyConnectsColorado.org.**

Find a digital version of this guidebook, along with other resources, at FamilyConnectsColorado.org.



Helpful Numbers

In an emergency, call 911. See page 8 for help in determining emergency situations.

Poison Control Line: 800-222-1222

Postpartum Support International: 800-944-4773 (English, Spanish)

Postpartum Support International is dedicated to helping families suffering from postpartum depression, anxiety, and distress.

National Maternal Health Hotline: 1-833-852-6262 (English, Spanish, and interpreter services for additional languages)

The National Maternal Health Hotline is a 24/7, free, confidential hotline for pregnant and new moms in English and Spanish.

ParentSmart Healthline at Children's Hospital Colorado: 855-543-4636 (KID-INFO)

Call the ParentSmart Healthline to speak with an experienced pediatric nurse 24/7.

The National Parent Helpline®: 855-427-2736

Call the National Parent Helpline® to get emotional support from a trained advocate and become empowered and a stronger parent.



Illuminate Colorado is partnering with Family Connects International® to bring home visiting to all families with newborns in Colorado. Illuminate Colorado's mission is to strengthen families, organizations and communities to prevent child maltreatment. Learn more at [IlluminateColorado.org](https://www.IlluminateColorado.org).

