

OUR LITTLE SUNSHINE

Baby's First Appointment-

Congratulations! We're glad you've chosen Caring Family! We hope to have a mutually satisfying relationship with you and your little sunshine! These handouts are designed to answer questions and guide you through this wonderful experience of parenthood.

It's normal to:

- Wonder when you will sleep thru the night.
- Be confused with lots advice from everyone.
- Be insecure about how you are providing for your baby.
- Need some help while *your* body is recuperating.

Normal sleeping patterns emerge slowly... expect about 6 weeks of interrupted nights. You **MUST** sleep when baby sleeps. Ignore all the undone tasks at home, and let your company guard the door while the two of you sleep!

You will also forge a stronger bond with your baby by napping at the same time. You will be the world's foremost expert on your baby due to all the time you spend together. Being rested will heal your body and spirit, and your baby senses that. Although you will be overwhelmed with information, choose the best advice and dispense with what doesn't feel right for you.

Whether relatives or friends, you need to direct all the helping hands. Your focus must be baby and your return to health. It's wonderful when Dad can take time off too, the extra bonding is irreplaceable. Dad can't nurse baby, but chillin' skin to skin is awesome. Don't miss out! Mom may need you to run a little defense for her health, as the adrenaline high from giving birth will go away soon.

When your baby cries they are trying to tell you something.

- I'm hungry- sometimes I eat every hour!
- My diaper is wet- though some kids don't mind that.
- I'm cold- check my back with the back of your hand.
- I'm hot- you will know if my back is sweaty.
- I'm missing some sounds from when I was in mom's belly.
- Mom ate something that didn't agree with me.
- My burp won't come out- burp me after every ounce!
- I'm in pain- check fingers, toes, tags on my clothes.
- I'm sleepy- get me away from this crowd!
- I don't know why- just pick me up- you can't spoil me yet.
- Maybe I just want to scream for a while-

Frustration is part of getting to know your baby, and your baby getting to know you. Certain experiences may stimulate agonizing memories in you that overwhelm you. Get help if you can't shake free of your own pain. If you are freaking out with the baby's cries, put the baby in a safe place and call for help. **NEVER** shake a baby. It won't quiet the baby and it may harm the baby.

You may be frustrated with how often your child eats. Your baby will need you to manage the timing and length of feedings- [hint: more complete feedings instead of tiny snacks every 45 minutes!] Babies **MUST** sleep on their back, not on their bellies. Sleeping is natural and will



happen even if baby at first doesn't like being on his back. We truly have more kids alive today because of the research that showed there were more SIDS deaths with babies sleeping on their tummies.

God is part of the magnificence of life and he has blessed you to be co-creators in the glorious child you now have. Your baby feels every little movement of your heart. Now baby can't tell the difference between you and he. Only as baby grows up he will eventually see that he has emotions and a soul that moves on its own. Your baby will sense things in you of which you might be unaware. So this is naturally an emotional time, but if you can't shake a very overwhelming or sad feeling, please come and talk to us about it.



Caring for Your Little Sunshine

I like my head supported with your hand behind my head because my neck muscles can't hold my head up yet

I roll partway side-to-side so **NEVER** put me in a place where I could fall because I could hurt myself; I want the car seat set down on a low place, not a countertop, **and not for sleeping.**

My soft spot on my head won't go away till about 18 months; bones of my skull are still knitting themselves together.

I feel comforted when you hold me close, smile and talk gently to me. Don't be afraid of spoiling me because I need to be held and touched.

I take in everything that goes on around me, I just won't tell you about it for another 3 years. That's why I need to hear you speaking, telling me what's up, even reading to me.

Meals

I just want to drink either formula or **YOUR** milk. Cereal is not well digested till 4-6 months. I don't need it in my bottle; it won't make me sleep better.

Please don't prop my bottle, I could choke.

You might see me put my hand in my mouth, make sucking sounds or search for a breast (root) when I am hungry, or I might just be moving my mouth, being fussy or clenching my fists.

I am usually satisfied when I turn away, close my mouth or push away. If I fall asleep, remove my bottle so I don't choke.



I don't always need a bottle or breast when I fuss. Use my growth and wet diapers (expect 6-8 a day if I am well-fed) to

evaluate if I am taking enough milk. Usually I need 8-12 feeds a day.

During the day if I am going through a growth spurt I might need to eat every hour and a half, but pretty soon I will get the hang of sleeping longer at nighttime.

If you are nursing I will remember the tastes of things you ate while pregnant. I might not like how my tummy feels when you eat certain things, so if I am fussy, think about what you ate.

Baby Care

Please don't put anything up my butt, not even a thermometer. If I feel hot, put a thermometer under my armpit.

At my age, fevers can mean trouble, so if I am over 100.6° F please call Caring Family.

It's always a good idea to have emergency phone numbers at hand or on your phone, you'll be nervous the first time I'm sick.

Everyone who holds me should WASH their hands first, right now my immune system is immature. If I am breast-fed, mom will give me some protection as long as she gets the illness first.

My skin is very sensitive now and I can get cradle cap and acne. If you are not sure about a rash let us see it.

Avoid giving me too much direct sunlight. Cover me up or keep me mostly in the shade. I still need fresh air though!! Take me outside all year!

Don't put bumpers on the crib until I am a few months old and can turn over by myself, I could suffocate on the soft bumpers.

Hot water can burn my skin quickly. Be careful to test all bottles on your wrist first (shake some out) and be extra paranoid when your coffee or soup is close to me!

Test the water at home to see it is not over 125° F with a meat thermometer in a glass of water with hot water running.

Keep me away from smoke, in house or car!

Baths are fun! But the umbilical "stump" should fall off before my first bath. Make sure water's temperature is fine first. Don't leave me for a moment in the bathtub alone.

My skin is naturally protected by oils my body makes! So while bathing, don't use soap till the end, and then just a little bit. Soap removes my skin's natural oils very quickly.

If I have dry or irritated skin, try bathing me less often.

Dress me only as well as you dress (or maybe one extra layer). If I fuss, check my back (skin to skin) with the back of your hand. If sweaty, I'm overdressed, if chilly, get me a blanket!

Stuffy noses are common in cold season. Always get mom sick first and she will make immunity I can drink in (if nursing).

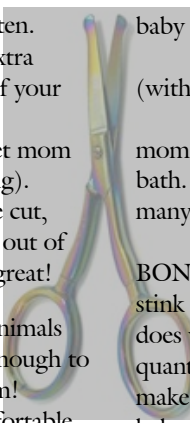
When my nails need to be cut, catch me while I'm sleeping or just out of the bath. Blunt end scissors work great!



Soft pillows and stuffed animals cannot be in my crib till I am old enough to turn over. I could suffocate in them!

Even if I seem more comfortable

on my tummy and even if grandma insists, ***I cannot*** sleep on my tummy. Half of SIDS deaths were eliminated when all babies were moved to sleep on their backs!!



Trouble Nursing

There is a natural learning curve both for you and baby. A very common problem is to let the baby stay on your



breast too long and then causing irritated nipples. That can lead to mastitis and most importantly put an early end to your nursing experience.

Your baby should be making a good suck (not a bite or chew) on your nipple. This can be practiced on a finger (with a short nail!) if baby is confused as to the right way to do it. When baby latches on nicely and provides a good suck it should feel good, not painful. If it is painful get some advice! Moms who nursed their children are usually excited to help you (in person is the best).

Some women have slow milk production in the first few weeks and the baby is crying out of hunger. Use your motherly intuition and give some formula (but always after a good session of suckling on your breast). Your baby will be conditioned to suckle well for the reward of formula or breast milk in a bottle afterward. In a matter of a little time the breasts should be providing all that the baby needs. Be upbeat and positive using this approach. Just your attitude can help the milk come down. If you have a health problem and need help relaxing, we can find something safe for you and baby, just ask!

Bottles of formula (and breast milk) go bad at room temperature quickly. So just put a small amount (2-3 ounces) in the bottle, and if it is not all taken in an hour or so, pour it out. Room temperature water for mixing formula is just fine. Microwaving a bottle can make scalding hot steam and should be avoided!!

Communication

Talk to your baby from the heart. If you are sad or tired, that is ok. Obviously if you are angry we need to get those emotions in check, as baby had no intention of angering you. Call us or a friend or relative if you are afraid of "losing it" with your baby. Lots of help is available.

Singing and reading books are ways of showing baby how we communicate. Babies who are read to are quicker to acquire language skills.

Hold your face close so baby can make eye-heart contact. Baby uses smell a lot as well. As you move your head baby will learn to follow your face by moving their own eyes.

Try talking to baby from different parts of the room to help baby coordinate sight and sound.

Skin on skin: chest to chest contact for both mom and dad (with baby!) make for awesome memories and Kodak moments!

DADS- take a real chunk of time with the baby. This is time mom is free to go to store or spa or hair salon... or even just a hot bath. You may be uncomfortable at first but soon will bond in a way many dads never experience.

MOMS- LET DAD BOND! Don't be over him like stink and critique everything he does wrong. Heart to heart with quantity not just quality time will make any boy into a man and beloved daddy.



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