

# Well Check: First week

Having a new baby is exciting — and challenging! As a parent, you have a lot to do to help your baby stay healthy and develop well. At every well-child visit, we'll give you a handout like this to help you remember important things to do at home. We're here to help.

## Feeding your baby

You're about to start spending lots of time feeding. This is a nice way to get to know your baby.

- **Feed your baby only breast milk or iron-fortified formula.** You can start to give your baby water or other food in 4 to 6 months.
- **Offer to feed whenever your baby is hungry.** Signs your baby is hungry include sucking or rooting, putting hand to mouth, and crying.
- **If you're breastfeeding:**
  - Breastfeed 8 to 12 times a day for 10 to 20 minutes each time.
  - Give your baby vitamin D drops as recommended by your healthcare provider.
  - If you have concerns about breastfeeding, talk with a specialist. We can refer you to one.
- **If you're formula feeding:**
  - Offer to feed whenever your baby is hungry or, on average, about 2 ounces every 2 to 3 hours.
  - To help with your baby's development and to prevent choking, hold your baby so you can look in each other's eyes.
  - Follow the instructions on the container to prepare, warm, and store formula safely.



For the first few weeks, your baby will spend most of the time eating and sleeping.

## Keeping your baby safe and well

You'll start developing lots of new ways of doing things. Building good everyday habits can go a long way toward keeping your baby safe and well.

- **Protect your baby from germs.**
  - During the first 3 months, a fever can be a sign of serious illness. If you think your baby is ill, take your baby's rectal temperature. **If the temperature is 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, call our office right away.**
  - Make sure you and everyone else who cares for your baby is up to date on immunizations, especially for pertussis (whooping cough) and the flu.
  - Wash your hands often, and have everyone who touches your baby wash their hands first.
  - Protect your baby from cigarette smoke and vaping.
  - Avoid people who are sick.
  - Avoid crowds.

- **Be safe in the car and when you're out.**
  - Have your baby ride in a rear-facing car seat in the middle of the back seat. Never place your baby's car seat in a seat with an air bag.
  - **Don't drive distracted.** Never drink, use drugs, text, or use the phone while driving. If your baby distracts you, pull over.
  - Keep your baby out of direct sunlight.
  - **Never leave your baby alone in a car.**
  - Don't carry your baby in a sling until they have good head control.
- **Be safe at home.**
  - To reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome — also called **SIDS** — always put your baby to sleep on their back. Don't put bumpers, loose blankets, or fluffy toys in the crib.
  - Your baby should sleep in a crib in your room, not in your bed. Use a crib with slats 2 3/8 inches apart or less, and keep the crib's sides up.
  - Prevent burns by keeping the water heater below 120°F. Test your baby's bath water on your wrist. Set down a hot drink before holding your baby.
  - Keep emergency numbers handy, and learn infant CPR.

### My follow-up appointment

Your next well-child visit will be when your baby is 2 weeks old.

Date/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Here are some helpful resources in the meantime:

- ***Baby and You: Living and Learning Together.*** If you delivered in an Intermountain hospital, you were given this before you went home.
- **[IntermountainMoms](#)** Facebook page

## Helping your baby grow

Remember that caring for yourself will help you take better care of your baby. In these first weeks, try to get some rest and adjust to the new addition to your family.

- **Enjoy the first weeks of your baby's life.**
  - Spend time holding, cuddling, singing, and talking to your baby.
  - Start making routines for your baby's bathing, feeding, sleeping, and playing.
  - If you need to wake your baby to eat, try patting or undressing them, or changing their diaper.
  - To comfort your baby, try gently touching, rocking, or swaddling them. You can also try talking or singing softly to them.
- **Take care of yourself.**
  - Try to sleep when your baby is sleeping.
  - Don't try to do everything on your own. Accept help from friends and family.
  - If you feel less interested in doing things or down, depressed, or hopeless, call your doctor or our office.
- **Help the whole family welcome the baby.**
  - Try to get back to your family's normal routines.
  - Give your other children small ways to help.
  - Try to spend a few special moments alone with each of your children and with your partner.

### When should I call my doctor?

Call our office if your baby:

- Has a temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher
- Is very floppy, eating poorly, or if you have trouble waking them up
- Hasn't had at least 2 wet diapers in 24 hours

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