



William Bush, M.D.

Joan Downs, M.D.

Cheryl Dyksen, M.D.

Alissa Enzenberger, M.D.

Kathleen Howard, M.D.

Marcy Larson, M.D.

Brian LeCleur, M.D.

Randy Leja, D.O.

Michael Meindertsma, M.D.

Claire Olgren, M.D.

Barbara Periard, M.D.

Cara Zokoe, MD

Common Newborn Concerns

877 Forest Hill Ave

Grand Rapids, MI 49546

Phone: (616) 949-4465

Fax: (616) 949-6191

www.ForestHillsPediatrics.com

Congratulations on your new baby! We hope the next few days will give you a chance to rest while you get to know your newborn. The discharge physician will let you know if you need a 24-48 hour appointment or a 2 week appointment. Please call our office to schedule the appointment. It is advisable to also schedule the first two appointments at that time.

Below is information on some common newborn concerns from new parents during their first days at home. We hope this information will put your mind at ease. If you are still anxious after reading this, please do not hesitate to call.

Reminder: Contact your human resource department to add your baby to your insurance. Most insurance companies require that the baby is added within 30 days from his/her birth. You will need to get the birth certificate and social security card to begin this process.

JAUNDICE: Two-thirds of all infants appear slightly yellowish, or jaundiced, during their first week. However, if your baby's yellow color becomes prominent on the chest or legs, please call our office. Often when this happens an infant will become more sleepy, feed poorly, and have fewer wet diapers. Please call the office if you notice changes.

FEEDING: Most newborns will eat every two to four hours. By the third day, an infant will have a wet diaper with almost every feeding. Bowel movements tend to be more varied. Some will have a stool after every feeding while some will have one a day. After one month of age, babies who are breastfed may only have one stool every 4-5 days. A breastfed baby's stool is yellow, watery, and seedy. A formula-fed baby's stool is firmer and may vary in color. Constipation is when the stool is pellet or log-like, dry, or hard. It is not uncommon for the infant to strain and turn red in the face during a normal bowel movement. As long as the baby is feeding well, not too fussy, and is not projectile vomiting (vomit that shoots across the room), there is no need to worry. Many babies will spit up after feeding, especially if they did not burp well or ate too much. Please call our office if your baby is not feeding well, experiences projectile vomit, or is not having 6-8 wet diapers a day.

HICCUPS: Most healthy newborns have frequent hiccups. They may be so violent that they cause the baby's entire body to shake and shudder for 5-10 seconds. Hiccups cause no medical problems. They become less frequent as the weeks pass.

SKIN CONDITIONS: Small white spots on the baby's face are called milia. They are the result of plugged sweat glands. Newborns may get a rash that looks like bug bites – a raised white center surrounded by a red area. Both conditions are normal and will disappear without treatment. At about 3-4 weeks of age, your infant may develop acne, especially on the face. Again, this does not respond to treatment and is generally gone by 3 months of age.

EYES: Newborns frequently have watery eyes or whitish discharge from their eyes, usually from a blocked tear duct. If this discharge becomes thick and yellow/green, please call our office.

UMBILICUS (NAVEL): The stump from the umbilical cord will fall off any time between 1-3 weeks after birth. As the stump moves around and falls off, it may bleed a little. If the area at the base of the cord seems moist or oozy, gently dry the area with a plain Q-tip 2-3 times a day. Keep the diaper folded down off the stump; such care will help to keep it free from infection. Keep in mind, this is rotting tissue and foul odor is not uncommon. If the drainage continues for more than 5 days after the stump has fallen off or if there is a large amount of bleeding, pus, or redness on the surrounding skin, please call our office.

CIRCUMCISION: The penis will still be quite red and raw. As it heals, there may be a moist, yellow coating on the head of the penis. It is best to continue to apply Vaseline to this area until it has healed in 4-7 days. This offers some protection from stool and urine as well as keeps the area from sticking to the diaper.

VITAMINS: A breastfeeding mother should continue taking her prenatal vitamins. All babies should be started on a vitamin D supplement. Breastfed babies should continue this as long as they are receiving breast milk. Formula-fed babies should be on vitamin D until taking at least 32 oz of formula per day.

GAS: Excessive gas and accompanying stomach pains are normal in newborns. Episodes of sharp pains and pressure of gas can occur anytime. The most common is in the early evening. For breastfeeding mothers, this is not usually due to a food you are eating. If you are wondering about eliminating foods from your diet, please talk with your pediatrician first. Formula-fed babies may need a switch in formula if the gas becomes excessive, but please call the office first to discuss.

BREATHING: Many newborns will breathe rapidly for a few breaths, pause for a few seconds, and then breathe rapidly again. This pattern is called periodic breathing and is normal. Infants frequently breathe noisily after naps and first thing in the morning because of mucus that collects in the back of the throat after lying down. They breathe through this mucus and their breathing rattles. Sneezing is also normal and does not mean a baby has a cold or allergies. If along with the congestion, your baby has nasal drainage or a cough, please call our office for instructions. In homes where parents smoke, newborns are stuffier, and they can have more frequent colds, ear infections, wheezing, and pneumonia. It is important not to smoke anywhere in the house or car.

FEVER: It is not necessary to take your newborn's temperature regularly. If your baby is irritable, lethargic, not feeding well, or is warm or cold to the touch, it would be wise to check his/her temperature. A rectal temperature is the most accurate in a baby. If it is 100.4 F or higher, please call our office immediately until your baby is older than 3 months old.

SLEEPING: The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all healthy infants sleep on their backs to reduce the risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome). This is most important during the first six months of life. Secondhand smoke also increases a baby's risk of SIDS. We also recommend the use of a firm, flat mattress in a safety-approved crib. To prevent the development of a flat area on your infant's head, be sure to rotate the direction your baby faces while in the crib.

We hope the above information was helpful and will put your mind at ease by addressing some of your concerns. Please call the office if you have any questions. We look forward to seeing you and your baby in the office. Don't forget to use a car seat every time you travel with your baby.