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Health Tips For Your Baby

How to take care of minor problems.

CARE OF UMBILICAL CORD:

The end of the cord will fall off in a couple of weeks after birth.

Until it falls off, keep it clean and dry.

Keep diaper below cord so that the cord stays dry.

Dab with alcohol on a cotton swab 1–2 times each day.

Call your baby's health care giver if it looks red, irritated, bleeds or oozes, or has a bad odor.

CARE OF CIRCUMCISION:

A circumcision should heal in 7–10 days.

If the tip of the penis is irritated by the diaper, put a little bit of petroleum jelly on the irritated area each time you change the diaper.

PREVENT DIAPER RASH:

Change diapers often.

Wash baby's bottom with soap and warm water at each change.

Use zinc oxide paste or diaper rash cream on irritated areas.

TREAT DIAPER RASH:

Leave baby's diaper area uncovered for a few hours each day. (Place several folded cloth diapers under baby.)

Use zinc oxide or diaper rash cream on irritated areas after washing.

TREAT DIARRHEA:

If you are breastfeeding, continue to do so.

Call baby's health care giver if your baby won't take liquids, can't keep them down, has a lot of diarrhea, or has diarrhea for longer than 12 hours. (Diarrhea can be a very serious problem for little babies, who can lose a lot of fluid quickly.)

There are special drinks —called oral electrolyte solutions— that infants with diarrhea should be given to keep them from becoming very sick.

TREAT COLIC:

Make sure that your baby is not crying for some other reason (wet diaper, hunger, tight clothing, loneliness).

Hold baby, stomach down, across your knees.

Rock your baby.

Push your baby in a carriage or stroller.

TREAT A COLD:

Try to make your baby more comfortable.

Call baby's health care provider if your baby has a fever.

When to call the doctor ...

YOU SHOULD CALL YOUR BABY'S HEALTH CARE GIVER IMMEDIATELY IF YOUR BABY:

Has breathing problems (has to work hard to get air in and out).

Cries (more or differently from the usual), or moans as if in pain, or is very fussy.

Has a temperature higher than 100° F.

Vomits (more than a spit up) or has diarrhea (very watery, loose, foulsmelling stools) more than 2–3 times in a day.

Has even one large, very watery bowel movement and is less than 3 months old.

Passes blood or blood clots with urine or bowel movement.

Has a convulsion (shaking arms and legs).

ALSO CALL IF YOUR BABY:

Seems weak, has no energy to cry as loudly as usual.

Refuses to feed or nurses poorly (or doesn't want more than 1/2 of the usual bottle).

Doesn't wake up as alert as usual, or for older babies, is not playful, even for a short time.

Just doesn't "seem right" and you are worried.

When you call the health care provider about your sick baby, write down the advice you get. Have available the telephone number of a pharmacy in case your care giver wants to phone in a prescription.