



# Your New Baby

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If your baby is born in a hospital, you will receive discharge information about his health and instructions about follow-up appointments. Ask any questions before leaving.

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## Planning for Your Baby's Health Care

A Public Health Nurse will stop by to see you in the hospital, give you a [Tips for New Parents brochure](#) and ask you if you wish to receive a phone call from a public health nurse once you are home from the hospital. When the Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) nurse calls, she will assess how you and your baby are doing and answer any questions you may have. [Ontario's Healthy Babies Healthy Children program](#) provides home visits by public health nurses and home visitors to expectant and new parents who need more support and can benefit from the program. You may also refer yourself prenatally to the HBHC program by calling 519.352.7270, ext. 2903.

Usually mother and baby are discharged from the hospital at the same time. If either of you need to stay longer or be re-admitted, the adjustment to parenting may be more difficult. Be sure to speak to hospital staff about community resources to help you manage.

## Jaundice

Newborn jaundice (refers to the yellow colour of skin and whites of the eyes caused by elevated bilirubin) is common and usually appears in the first 3-5 days of life. It usually decreases as you and your baby establish frequent breastfeeding (at least 8 times per 24 hours), and your baby has [enough wet diapers and stools](#).

When bilirubin is high, babies are usually sleepy, do not feed as well and are at risk for dehydration and other problems. The Chatham-Kent Public Health intake line (519.352.7270 x 2903) will give you tips on feeding a sleepy baby. If you have concerns, see your health care provider. You may be asked to take your baby for a blood test. If treatment is required, your baby may be re-admitted to the hospital for phototherapy (special lights).



## Newborn Screening Tests

Newborn Screening is important for every baby. Screening for at least 29 diseases is done on a small sample of blood ideally taken from the baby's heel shortly after birth (the heel-prick test). Most babies are born healthy but about 1 in 1,000 babies will have one of the diseases screened for. The benefits of early detection and treatment far outweigh the short term discomfort. Skin-to-skin contact with your baby during the heel prick and after will ease the sensation of pain.

**More information:** [Ontario Newborn Screening Program](#)

## Well Baby Check-Ups

Be sure to make an appointment for your baby's first visit to your family doctor within the first week. This will be the beginning of routine checkups that are important for ensuring your baby stays as healthy as possible. Your baby's length, weight and head size will be measured. He will be given a physical exam and checked for normal growth and development. Immunizations will be discussed and given at future appointments.

## Cord Blood Collection and Banking

Stem cells may be collected from your baby's umbilical cord blood and banked for the future, with the potential to treat certain diseases. This process must be discussed with your health care provider well in advance of your birth as it involves private business, additional charges and special arrangements.

**More information:** Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada: <http://pregnancy.sogc.org/labour-and-childbirth/umbilical-cord-blood/>

## Umbilical Cord Clamping

Research is showing that changing the timing of cord clamping and cutting from immediately after birth (early cord clamping) of the baby to 1–3 minutes after birth (delayed cord clamping) of the baby improves the iron status of the infant. The baby's blood system is separate from the mother's. The blood in the placenta and umbilical cord is part of the baby's blood system. Delayed cord clamping can provide an infant with approximately 30% more blood volume. Delayed cord clamping and cord blood collection and banking may not be compatible. You will need to discuss this with your health care provider.

**More Information:** [Delayed cord clamping](#)

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Well baby checkups are a great time to ask questions (keep a list) and discuss any concerns, such as what to do if your baby gets sick.

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Watch the online [Adjusting to Life with a Newborn](#) video developed by Chatham Kent Public Health Unit.



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Your baby will grow and develop very quickly in the first few years of life. It is important to monitor your child's development to make sure your baby is growing and developing the way he should.

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## Newborn Male Circumcision

In Canada, newborn male circumcision is a procedure that is generally done for personal choice, cultural or religious reasons. Speak to your health care provider about risks, benefits, arrangements and costs.

The Ontario government does not cover the cost of circumcision.

**More information:** [Canadian Pediatric Society](#)

## Your Baby's Development

A handy tool for parents to use is the Looksee Checklist. The checklist is a developmental screening tool that can be completed by a parent or caregiver. It gives you a quick picture of your child's development to discuss with your healthcare provider. The areas of development covered by the Looksee Checklist include vision, hearing, emotional, fine motor, gross motor, social, self-help, communication, and learning and thinking. The screens are completed at key developmental stages up to age six. The tool can be accessed for free at <https://lookseechecklist.com/default/> or by contacting the Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit.

## Comforting Your Baby

### Temperament

Babies have their own temperament – some are calm by nature, some react and show distress more strongly. Gradually you will learn your baby's signs and how to comfort her. For ideas on how to comfort your baby see page 1 of the Becoming Parents tab.

### Observing your baby's cues or signals

Crying is one way your baby expresses hunger, discomfort, tiredness and loneliness but is usually a late sign. Often it is easier to feed a baby, soothe her, or help her fall asleep if you can respond to his early signs. It is often more difficult and takes longer to comfort a baby who is crying hard.

### Early signs that babies are hungry:

- Sucking and licking movements with the mouth.
- Putting hands to the mouth.

### Early signs of discomfort or that babies are tired:

- Turning away.
- Avoiding eye contact.
- Squirming, upset face.

### See your health care provider if you are concerned about your baby's crying:

- Trust your instincts.
- Your crying baby may be sick.



*A secure attachment between you and your baby develops over time and the benefits last a lifetime*

During growth spurts (around 3 weeks, 6 weeks, 3 months and 6 months of age) babies feed more often and breast milk supply increases to meet their needs.

## What to expect

Babies may have fussy periods in the late afternoon or evening, when parents are often tired. Babies may want to breastfeed more often during certain times of the day or night (cluster feeding).

**There are 3 very important times to pay attention to your baby's cries:**

1. When your baby is upset.
2. When your baby is sick.
3. When your baby is hurt.

**Comforting your baby especially during these times makes her feel loved and builds trust. It does not spoil her.**

As you get to know your baby, you will learn to read the signals that tell you when your baby needs you, and also the signals that tell you your baby is content just knowing you are nearby.

All parents want to do their best. What matters is that, most of the time, when your baby needs you, you try to comfort her.

## Reading Your Baby's Cues

Babies are able to communicate their needs through verbal and nonverbal forms of communication called cues. Your baby's cues will tell you whether they want to interact, need a break, are hungry or tired. As you get to know your baby you will begin to recognize some of your baby's cues. These cues may include:

### **I want to interact with you**

Verbal cues: Sucking, cooing, giggling, babbling, talking

Nonverbal cues: eyes widening, facial brightening, eye contact, smiling, head turning toward caregiver, hands open, hands together, reaching toward caregiver, smooth cyclic movements, smiling.

### **I need a break**

Verbal cues: sighing, whimpering, whining, fussing, crying, hiccupping, spitting, choking, vomiting.

Nonverbal cues: increased kicking movements, arm extended, pained face, puckered face, squints/blinks, frown, yawn, turning away, head lowering, hand to ear, hand to mouth, gaze aversion.

### **I'm Hungry**

Clenched fingers and fists over chest and tummy, flexed arms and legs, mouth movements, rooting, hand to mouth movements, fussiness, sucking movements and sounds.

### **I'm Full**

Arms and legs relaxed, arms straightened along sides, fingers extended, decreased sucking, pushing away, lack of facial movements, falling asleep.

INFANT SLEEP-ACTIVITY STATES		
	What Baby Does	What Parents Can Do
<b>Deep</b>	Your baby is relaxed and still, occasional movements but rarely awakes, breathing is even.	Rest and take care of yourself. Your baby is content and does not need you at this time.
<b>Light</b>	This is the most common sleep state in newborns. Your baby's eyes are closed but may make slight movement behind her eyelids, breathing is irregular. Baby may move, make noises, smile or grimace. She may awaken to the drowsy state or may fall back into deep sleep.	When your baby moves and makes sounds wait to see if she awakens to a drowsy state and needs care. She may fall back asleep.
<b>Drowsy</b>	Your baby appears sleepy, may be still or moving her limbs. Baby's eyelids may open and close for short periods. Breathing is irregular and she slowly reacts to stimuli.	Your baby may fall back into light sleep or can be awakened by singing, talking or by being picked up.
<b>Quiet Alert</b>	This is the best time for parents to enjoy their baby. She lies still and looks at you with bright, wide eyes. Breathing is regular and she focuses on what she can see or hear.	This is a good time to play with your baby!
<b>Active Alert</b>	Your baby is beginning to need something but she may not know what. She does not lie still, is fussy, eyes are open but not as focused as in the quiet-alert state. Breathing is irregular, and she may make faces. If baby is hungry, over stimulated, tired or if there is too much noise she may start to fuss or cry.	This is the time to figure out what your baby needs. If you give your baby what she needs now, you can calm her down before she starts to cry.
<b>Crying</b>	Baby's way of saying "I really need something right away." She moves actively, makes faces, cries, opens and closes her eyes and breathes irregularly.	Sometimes crying is a way for your baby to enter another state but usually she is telling you she needs to be fed or comforted.



*Both parents play an important role in comforting their baby.*

## Take care of yourself

Eat well and take a nap when your baby naps. Call a friend or go for a walk. Learn about places that offer support and help. Call the Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit at 519.352.7270.

## Help for parents is available

Listening to a baby cry for long periods of time can be very frustrating. Ask a family member or friend to help. If you feel depressed about your baby's crying, talk with your health care provider or a Public Health Nurse at 519.352.7270.

It is normal to feel upset when your baby cries. If you ever feel angry or worried that you might lose control, put your baby in a safe place such as her crib. Go to another room for a few minutes.

**Ask for help. Take time to calm down.**

More information: [Period of Purple Crying](#)

## Never shake your baby!

**Shaking can damage your baby's brain and may cause death. No child at any age should be shaken.**

Sleep is very important to your child's health and well-being. Good sleep habits start from birth. It is normal and healthy for babies to wake up during the night to feed. As babies get older and become more active during the day, they sleep for longer stretches at night.

## Safe Sleeping

### Infant Sleep Patterns

- Sleep patterns vary as babies grow. Newborns typically have one long sleep period every day.
- They may have their days and nights mixed up and be awake more at night.
- One-month-olds will be alert for 1 to 3 hour stretches and sleep an average of 15 hours in a 24-hour day.

### Sleeping Through the Night

- Newborns need to wake often because they have small tummies, breast milk is easy to digest and they are gaining weight quickly.
- Expect to breastfeed every 1 to 3 hours.
- There will also be waking times during growth spurts. Gradually, babies take more of their feedings during the day and sleep longer periods at night.

Reasons for night waking include:

- hunger
- too hot or cold
- growth spurts
- need comforting
- illness

### Bedtime routines

- You can influence your child's sleep patterns by developing a regular bedtime routine that gives a clear signal to your baby that sleep time is coming.
- A bedtime routine could include a bath, quiet reading or singing, a cuddle and gentle rocking with lights dimmed.
- A consistent, predictable daily routine helps children feel secure and develop regular sleep habits.

### Safe Sleep Position and SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome)

#### Reduce risk of SIDS:

- Position your baby on her back to sleep.
- Have a smoke-free home.
- Breastfeed.
- Keep your baby warm but not hot.
- Keep stuffed toys out of your baby's crib.



*Do not use crib bumper pads, duvets or comforters, sheepskin, heavy blankets, positioners or pillows.*



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All your baby really needs for a great beginning is your love, nourishment, playtime and protection.

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### Flat head

- Babies who always sleep with their head to the same side can develop flat spots (flat head).
- Babies tend to turn their head to look out into their room. Prevent your baby from getting a flat head by changing her position in her crib each day.
- One day, place your baby with her head at the head of the crib.
- The next day, place your baby with her head at the foot of the crib.

### Tummy time

- Tummy time helps prevent a flat spot on your baby's head.
- It also helps your baby develop strength and coordination. Give your baby supervised tummy time several times a day when awake.
- A minute or two may be enough at first.
- Soon tummy time will be a fun way for your baby to play and be active.

### Safe place

Where your baby will sleep – in his own room or in your room, in his own crib or in bed with you – is a personal choice. There are risks to having your baby sleep with you. Be informed about those risks to ensure your baby is safe.

### More Information:

[Flat Head](#)

[Tummy Time](#)

[Safe Sleep](#)

[Tummy Time Parent Information](#)

## Shopping For Your Baby

All parents want the best for their baby.

- You've probably already noticed the enormous amount of marketing of baby products aimed at new parents and parents-to-be.
- Before heading out to shop, it's a good idea to think about what your baby really needs.
- Then, if your budget has some extra cash, it's fun to select certain special items from your wants list.
- If your budget is tight, stick to the basics.
- Remember that safety is always important and that babies grow out of clothing and certain types of toys and equipment very quickly.
- This phase of parenting is just the beginning of a lifetime investment.



*Our children are the future. They are a priceless source of joy, hope and innocence. Parents naturally want to do everything they can to protect their children in everyday life.*

- [Is Your Child Safe? Series](#)
- [Is Your Child Safe?](#)
- [IsYourChildSafe?Sleep Time](#)
- [IsYour Child Safe? Play Time](#)

Need	Want	Item
<b>Diapering</b>		
		diaper bag
		newborn diapers
		change pad
		skin cream
		diaper disposal pail
		change table
<b>Sleeping</b>		
		crib and sheets
		2-3 light blankets
		mattress cover
		matching furniture
		monitor
<b>Going out</b>		
		car seat
		stroller
		baby sling/ carrier
<b>Bathing</b>		
		4-6 wash cloths
		3 towels
		unscented soap
		bath tub
		specialty baby wash
		baby shampoo

Need	Want	Item
<b>Feeding</b>		
		nursing bra and pads
		breast pump
<b>Clothing</b>		
		4-6 receiving blankets
		6-8 sleepers
		5-6 one piece undershirts
		sweater/coat
		snowsuit/hat
		3-4 pairs of socks
		infant shoes
<b>Play</b>		
		books
		mobile
		bouncy infant seat
<b>Equip/Other</b>		
		thermometer
		swing
		playpen
		mild detergent

## Safety and Baby Equipment

**There are many ways to create a safe place for your baby to play, learn and grow. Begin by learning:**

- how to safely install and use your car seat.
- what safety features to look for in baby equipment.
- how to adapt your home for your baby’s safety.

Be safety aware - as your baby grows and develops new skills you will need to continue to make safety adjustments in your home and surrounding environment.



Health Canada Consumer

Product Safety provides safety information and product recalls for the following equipment:

- Baby slings and carriers
- Baby walkers
- Bath seats
- Car seats
- Change tables
- Children’s clothing
- Cribs
- Playpens
- Portable bed rails
- Safety gates
- Strollers
- Suspended baby jumpers
- Toys

## Focus on Prevention

### Child Car Seats

Health Canada reports that car crashes are the number one cause of death for children aged one to nine. A [correctly used child restraint](#) will reduce the likelihood of a child being injured or killed in a crash by 75%. With these startling numbers in mind, make sure that you use the right car seat for your baby and use it properly every time. Visit [Parachute Canada](#).

### Home Safety

Home can be a safe place for children to learn and grow. Most injuries to young children do occur in the home. Find out more about hazards in all areas of your home at [Parachute Canada](#).

## Facts

- In Canada, 25 children die from injury every month.
- In Canada, every day 80 children require hospitalization.
- In Ontario, the leading injuries in children under five are falls, scalds and burns, and poisonings.
- Injuries can often be prevented by creating an environment, inside and outside the home, that is safe for children to explore.

### Web Resources

Prevent Child Injury: [www.preventchildinjury.ca](http://www.preventchildinjury.ca)

Parachute Canada: [www.parachutecanada.org/](http://www.parachutecanada.org/)

Ontario Poison Centre: [www.ontariopoisoncontrolcentre/](http://www.ontariopoisoncontrolcentre/)

Consumer Product Safety: [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/index-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/index-eng.php)

CRIB SAFETY	FALLS	CHOKING	BURNS	FIRE/POISONOUS GAS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check the label. Do not use cribs made before 1986 or drop-side cribs. - they are not safe.</li> <li>• If you can't find a label, do not use the crib.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Never leave your baby alone unless you know there is no risk of falling.</li> <li>• Place your baby in the crib or playpen.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep small objects out of your baby's reach.</li> <li>• Do not put a pacifier string or necklace around your baby's neck.</li> <li>• Do not prop a bottle in your baby's mouth.</li> <li>• Keep crib away from window blinds, cords and curtains.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Test your baby's bathwater – it should feel warm, not hot.</li> <li>• Turn your hot water heater temperature down to 48°C (120°F). Your tap water should not be hotter than 43°C (110°F).</li> <li>• Never hold your baby when smoking, drinking something hot, or cooking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure that you have smokedetectors and carbon monoxide detectors with charged batteries and a fire extinguisher that works.</li> </ul>



For more information, visit [www.chatham-kent.ca](http://www.chatham-kent.ca)  
 Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit, 519.352.7270  
 Monday to Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm  
 Toll Free: 1.866.251.7270 [www.ckphu.com](http://www.ckphu.com)