



WEEK 1: Baby's First Week

Congratulations on Your New Baby! Having a new baby to love and cuddle is so special. Most parents have lots of questions and worries when they have a new baby. We'll do our best to provide you with as much helpful information as we can. NOTE: This is a longer email as it is your first week at home and is there lots of information to share 😊

Appointment Alert!

If you haven't already, make sure that your baby has an appointment with his or her health care provider this week.

Umbilical Cord Care

Keep the area clean and dry. Do not apply anything to the area. The stump should fall off within 1-3 weeks (and voila baby's belly button!). Until it does, fold baby's diaper down so it does not rub against it. Speak to your health care provider if you notice any bleeding, yellow pus, foul-smelling discharge, or the area is red or swollen.

Feeding your Baby

Here are some tips whether you are breastfeeding or formula feeding:

- Newborn babies feed **at least 8 times** every 24 hours.
- Feed your baby whenever they show signs of hunger (such as turning head towards the breast, bringing hands to mouth, lip smacking, or clenched hands). Crying is often a late sign of hunger.
- Your baby will wake up many times at night to feed, this is common.
- It is also normal for babies to "cluster feed". This means your baby may feed often, even hourly. Ask for help during these times. Can your partner or support person take care of the baby after breastfeeding so you can rest? Could your partner or support person bring you some water or a snack when you are feeding so you stay nourished?

[Signs your Baby is Feeding Well](#)

Parents may worry if their baby is getting enough to eat. One way to tell is how often your baby pees and poops. Your baby should be having *at least* the number of wet and dirty diapers listed below:

Day 1: 1 wet diaper and 1 dark green or black poop
Day 2: 2 wet diapers and 1 dark green or black poop
Day 3: 3 wet diapers and 3 brown, green or yellow poops
Day 4: 4 wet diapers and 3 brown, green or yellow poops
Day 5 to 3 weeks old: 6 heavy wet diapers and 3 large, soft, yellow or brown poops

Other Signs Your Baby is Feeding Well:

- Your baby has a loud cry and their eyes look alert.
- Your baby's mouth is wet and pink.
- Your baby looks relaxed and sleeps after feeding.
- If you are breastfeeding, your breasts feel softer after feeds.



Breastfeeding

Breastmilk is the only food your baby needs for the first 6 months of life. It provides nutrition and fluids and helps to protect your baby against illness.

Breastfeeding is a new skill that both parents and baby are learning, and it may take time for you to feel confident.

- **Watch your baby, not the clock.** Watch for strong sucking and swallowing (see these [Breastfeeding Videos](#) for examples of this) and when your baby slows down or stops feeding on the first breast, burp your baby and offer the second breast. Your baby might only feed for a short time on the second breast. Change the breast you start on at each feed.
- Want more info about how often to breastfeed and for how long? Check out page 22 of [Breastfeeding Matters](#).

For more guidance, please see:

- [Breastfeeding Matters](#) booklet
- [Pumping and Storing Milk](#)

Did you know?

Breastfed and combination fed (breastmilk and infant formula) babies need a daily vitamin D supplement of 10 µg (400 IU). This can be found at your local pharmacy.

Breastfeeding Support

- To book an appointment at the PRHC Breastfeeding Clinic, call 705-876-5059.
- To speak with the lactation consultant directly, call 705-743-2121, ext. 2735.
- For 24-hour breastfeeding support, call 811 or visit [Health 811](#) to start a virtual chat.

See here for more [breastfeeding support options available in the Peterborough area](#).

Feeding Formula

If you make an [informed decision](#) to give infant formula, or if you are unable to give your baby your own breastmilk, then store-bought formula made with cow's milk is recommended.

To learn about how to safely prepare, store, and transport formula and when and how to feed your baby by reading their cues, please see [Infant Formula: What You Need to Know](#)

[Video – Safe Formula Prep](#)

If you use well water to prepare formula, it is important to [have your water tested](#) for contaminants such as nitrates and bacteria.

For information on pacifier use, see here: [Pacifiers \(soothers\)](#)



Sleep for your Baby

Babies under 3 months of age:

- Normally sleep between 14 and 18 hours a day.
- Usually wake every 2 to 3 hours to eat.
- May sleep at any time of the day or night.
- May move, grunt, and twitch during sleep.

Creating a safe sleep environment for your baby is important to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related causes of infant death such as suffocation. SIDS is the unexpected death of an infant less than one year of age. We don't know what causes SIDS, but the steps listed below can help lower the risk.

- **Place baby on their back to sleep** for every sleep whether it's naptime or nighttime.
- **Use a crib, cradle or bassinet that is [Health Canada approved](#)** at home or when traveling. Products such as sleep positioners, playpens, car seats, infant swings/bouncers, adult beds, waterbeds, and air mattresses are not recommended for infant sleep. If your baby falls asleep in a car seat or stroller, move them to a safe sleep space when you arrive at your destination.

- **Use a firm mattress with a tight, fitted sheet.** Remove all items that could cover your baby's face such as pillows, blankets, bumper pads, or toys.
- **Dress your baby in light, fitted clothes** such as a one-piece sleeper. Babies have cold hands, so feel your baby's back to check their temperature. Being too warm can increase the risk of SIDS.
- **Don't swaddle your baby.** The blanket can come loose and cover your baby's face. If using a sleep sack, it should be the correct size to prevent it from ever covering your baby's face. Extra bedding or hats indoors are not needed.
- **Keep your baby in the same room** as you for at least the first six months.
- **Breastfeed.** This has been shown to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- **Be Smoke-Free.** Keep smoke/vaping/cannabis away from your baby. If someone uses these substances, ensure that it is done outside and that the person's hands are washed well afterwards. Also ensure that no fabrics (clothing or furniture) come into contact with baby as they still have the chemicals on them.

Everyone who cares for your baby should be aware of these guidelines. They should follow them each time your baby is placed to sleep for naptime and bedtime.

What about bedsharing?

The safest place for your baby to sleep is on their own safe sleep surface. Some families may decide to bedshare for cultural or personal reasons, and some families might end up bedsharing even if they hadn't planned to. If you think you might ever share a bed with your baby, please see [Safer Sleep for my Baby](#) for some questions to ask yourself before bedsharing to ensure your baby is as safe as possible.

It is never safe for a baby to sleep on a couch or chair – either alone or with a caregiver. Your baby can fall to the floor or slip between your body and the cushions and leave them unable to breathe.

For more information, see [Safe Sleep for Your Baby](#)

Bath Time

It is recommended to delay baby's bath until 24 hours after birth. Your baby can have a full bath even if the cord stump has not fallen off – just pat it dry after the bath.

Babies do not need to be bathed every day. Bathing too often can cause your baby's skin to dry out. Wipe your baby's hands, face, neck, and diaper area every day.

STEPS to Bathing a Baby

Step 1: Preparation is key! First, gather all towels, facecloths, soap, a new diaper, and baby's clothes.

Step 2: Fill a tub or basin with 2 inches of warm water around 35°C (95°F). Test the water temperature on the inside of your wrist or elbow BEFORE putting baby in to make sure it is not too hot.

Step 3: When in the tub, support baby's head and have a hand on the baby at all times.

Step 4: Wash the head and body with unscented baby soap. Rinse well. There is no need to scrub cradle cap or vernix (white coating). It will come off in future baths.

Step 5: After the bath, wrap baby in a towel that is close by and dry completely.

[Bath Time Video: How to Bathe Your Baby](#)

Our friends at Parenting in Ottawa also have a great [video](#) series for parents to show you how to bathe and diaper your baby, as well as many other parenting topics.

“He didn't love it at first, but now he smiles and seems to enjoy it . Also, forget about the clothes with tons of buttons! With all the changes throughout the day, I've learned to keep it simple!” – Holly, Mom of 4-week-old Liam

Want to learn more?

You can also [register](#) for the ‘**Understanding your Newborn**’ eClass or the ‘**Understanding Breastfeeding**’ eClass in our online prenatal class platform for access to videos, 3D animations, and interactive learning activities.



Don't Forget to Register your Baby's Birth

[Register your Baby's Birth](#) to get a birth certificate, apply for a Social Insurance Number, sign up for Canada (Ontario) child benefits, and, if you like, start the process of opening a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP).

Again, congratulations from us all at Peterborough Public Health.
We'll be in touch again when your baby turns 1 week old.

