

GOLDEN MONTHS RESOURCE

Newborn Care Guide

Feeding, safe sleep, diapering, soothing, and the signals that mean call someone — the essentials, without the noise.

What newborns actually need

Newborns need four things on repeat: to be fed, to be kept warm and clean, to sleep safely, and to be held. Everything else is optional. This guide covers the practical basics and the signals that mean call someone.

Call your provider right away — or 911 for emergencies — if you notice:

- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher in a baby under 3 months — this is an emergency
- Trouble breathing, grunting, flaring nostrils, or a bluish color around the lips
- Refusing to feed, or far fewer wet diapers than usual
- Yellowing of the skin or eyes that is deepening
- Inconsolable crying that feels different from usual, or extreme floppiness

Feeding basics

Newborns eat 8–12 times in 24 hours, often clustered together in the evening. Cluster feeding is normal and does not mean you are failing or 'out of milk.'

- **Hunger cues come before crying:** rooting, hands to mouth, stirring, smacking lips. Crying is a late cue.
- **Output tells the story:** by day 5, expect roughly 6+ wet diapers and 3+ stools daily.
- **Feeding should not be painful.** Pinching, cracking, or toe-curling pain means the latch needs help — ask.
- **Fed is the goal.** Breast, bottle, formula, or combination — a fed baby and a supported mother is the outcome.

Safe sleep — every sleep, every time

- **Alone** — baby sleeps on their own surface, not in an adult bed, couch, or armchair.
- **On the back** — for naps and nights, until baby rolls independently both ways.
- **In a crib or bassinet** — firm, flat mattress with a fitted sheet only.
- **Bare is best** — no bumpers, pillows, blankets, or stuffed animals. Use a sleep sack for warmth.
- **Room-share, don't bed-share** — same room, separate surface, for at least the first 6 months.
- **Smoke-free** — no smoking in the home or car, and no one holding baby after smoking.

Diapering and cord care

Task	Notes	Done
Change promptly when wet or soiled	Front to back for girls; point down for boys	
Air out briefly at changes	The best rash prevention is dryness	
Keep the cord stump dry and open	Fold the diaper down below it	
Sponge bathe until the cord falls off	Usually 1–3 weeks	
Call for redness spreading from the cord	Or foul odor or pus	

Soothing a crying baby

Crying peaks around 6–8 weeks. That's development, not your failure. Work through these calmly:

- Check the basics: hunger, diaper, temperature, too much stimulation.
- Skin-to-skin contact — the most reliable regulator there is.
- Swaddle snugly (arms in, hips loose), offer sucking, sway slowly, add white noise.
- Step outside — a change of air and light resets both of you.
- **If you feel yourself losing patience:** put baby down safely in the crib, walk away, breathe, and call someone. Never shake a baby. Putting a baby down safely is always the right choice.

Bathing, nails, and skin

- 2–3 baths a week is plenty; more can dry newborn skin.
- Water should feel warm, not hot, on your inner wrist. Never leave baby unattended, even for a second.
- File nails rather than cutting them for the first weeks; trim while baby sleeps.
- Peeling skin, baby acne, and tiny white bumps are all normal and pass on their own.

A gentle note for the grown-ups

You will not do this perfectly, and your baby does not need perfect. Responsive, imperfect, present care is what builds security. Ask for help early and often — that is what your care team is for.

This guide is general education from Golden Months and does not replace care from your own clinician. Your Golden Months care team can personalize any of it for you. If something feels wrong, call your provider — trust yourself.