

Questions to Ask at Your Newborn Baby's First Office Visit

<http://www.pediatrichealthchannel.com/babys-first-doctor-visit/index.shtml>

Congratulations on the birth of your new baby! Few times in life are more exciting or more rewarding than the birth of a child. However, taking care of a newborn can involve a number of challenges. Even experienced parents and caregivers often have questions and concerns during the first days, weeks, and months of a baby's life.

Most newborn babies are seen in the pediatrician's office within a few days after leaving the hospital. Parents should be sure the baby is properly secured in an **infant safety seat** (car seat) **in the back seat of the car** on the way to this appointment, and every time he or she rides in a car.

At the first office visit, the pediatrician **answers questions, discusses concerns, and performs a physical examination**. It may be helpful to dress the baby in clothing that is easy to remove for the exam, such as a sleeper, and to bring a receiving blanket to wrap the baby in so he or she does not get chilly.

In addition to addressing specific concerns at this appointment, pediatricians often ask new parents questions about the **baby's schedule and home environment**, and about what a typical day is like for the family. He or she may ask how other children in the family are adjusting to the new baby and about whether the baby's mother (or any other family member or caregiver) is overly stressed, extremely tired and run-down, or may be depressed.

Good communication between parents and health care providers is an important part of keeping children healthy. Most pediatricians encourage parents to contact their office with any and all questions or concerns, especially during the baby's first year. Below are some general questions to ask at your newborn's pediatrician at his or her first office visit. **Print this page**, check your concerns, take it with you to your appointment, and give it to a pediatric nurse or to your baby's pediatrician.

- Do you provide 24-hour on-call care? How can we reach your practice after office hours?
Telephone number:
- What steps can we take to help reduce the risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)?
- Can you offer advice to help us bond with, calm, or soothe our baby? Do you recommend swaddling or using a pacifier?
- Can you show us how to safely use a bulb syringe to clear mucus from our baby's nose and a rectal thermometer to take his/her temperature?
- Our baby is extremely fussy at the same time each day. What may be wrong?

- Our baby gets the hiccoughs several times a day. Is this normal?
- Our baby sneezes frequently. Might he/she be sick?
- Our baby startles easily, is this cause for concern?
- Our baby has discharge from his/her eyes? Might this indicate an infection or blocked tear duct?
- Our baby's eyes often appear crossed. Is this normal?
- Do you recommend feeding the baby on demand? Should we wake up the baby for a feeding?
- Can you show us how to burp the baby during a feeding?
- Our baby spits up after just about every feeding, should we be concerned?
- About how many wet/soiled diapers should our baby have each day? How can we help prevent diaper rash?
- Our breastfed baby has a bowel movement after each feeding. Is this normal?
- Our baby's stools are very loose, is this cause for concern?
- Do you recommend putting the baby to sleep on his or her back?
- Our baby sleeps about ____ hours per day and about ____ hours each night. Should we be concerned?
- Do you have the results of screening tests that were performed at our baby's birth? Do you have any concerns regarding these results?
- Will our baby receive any immunizations today? If so, what are common side effects of these vaccines and what should we watch for that may indicate a serious reaction?
- After examining our baby, do you have any general concerns about his or her health? For example:
 - Growth (weight, length, head circumference)
 - Reflexes

- Vision
- Hearing
- Skin
- Heart, lungs, and other internal organs (abnormal breathing or heart sounds, heart murmur)
- Jaundice
- Shape of the head, soft spot (fontanelle)
- Genitals (e.g., vaginal discharge [in girls], undescended testicle [in boys], inguinal hernia)

Are the baby's umbilical cord and/or circumcision healing as expected? Do you have any additional recommendations regarding care of these areas?

Can you give us some advice to help our baby's siblings adjust to his or her arrival?

What can we expect from now until our baby's next appointment?

Next appointment: Date: _____ Time: _____

Notes/Additional Information