



the first month

A Premier Pediatrics
Program for New Parents

Hospital to Home

Having a newborn at home is an exciting time for a family. It is also a bit daunting and you may have several questions. Below are some answers to questions from parents we often receive during the first few weeks of their newborn's life.

When should I see the pediatrician?

All babies lose a little weight in the beginning. Therefore, at [Premier Pediatrics](#), we recommend that your infant sees a pediatrician within 2-3 days of leaving the hospital to have your baby weighed and assessed for jaundice.

What happens at the first visit?

First, we see how you and your partner are doing. After this huge transition, we want to check in with you and provide whatever support we can. We also review your family history and the story of your pregnancy, the birth, and your baby's first few days of life. After this, our primary focus is helping parents adjust to life with a newborn and devising a comfortable feeding strategy.

How often should I feed my newborn?

Newborns need to feed frequently, on average about every 2-3 hours (or 8-12 times/day). Breastfed babies should feed around 10-20 minutes on each breast. Bottle fed babies will feed 2-3oz every 2-3 hours. Until your baby is back at birth weight you should wake your baby after 3-4 hours of uninterrupted sleep. This scheduled feeding strategy, will quickly evolve into an on-demand feeding strategy as your baby grows and you feel comfortable with your own milk production (if you are breast feeding) and your baby's cues.

How will I know my baby is eating enough?

You will know this by the number of wet diapers your baby is having. By the fourth or fifth day of life your baby, a well fed baby produces 4-5 stools per day (he/she may stool more even every time he/she eats) and 5-6 wet diapers a day. If you have not seen a stool in >24 hours, or your baby seems either lethargic or fussy, you should call the office. Infant stool can be yellow, orange, green or brown and liquidy in consistency (like cottage cheese, toothpaste or mustard).

How awake is a child during the first days of life?

During the first weeks of life, many babies sleep most of the day. As long as your child feed vigorously on the schedule listed above, do not worry about the amount of time spent sleeping.

How do I care for the umbilical cord?

In most cases the umbilical cord will separate at around 10-14 days of life. Until that time you should take care to keep the area dry. You may clean the umbilical stump with alcohol once or twice a day if desired, but you should not use water. If you would like to bathe your baby, you may sponge bathe your child every 2-3 days using hypoallergenic soap.

When can I take my baby out?

You may take walks with your infant once you feel up to it. You should avoid crowded/enclosed spaces until after the 2 month vaccines. If your infant is exposed to crowded or enclosed spaces, it increases the risk of getting sick. It is okay to be outdoors with your child during the first two months. We recommend that you do not fly with your infant until after the two-month vaccines unless there are extenuating circumstances.

What if I am feeling anxious or overwhelmed during this period?

It is normal to feel anxious or overwhelmed in the early days following delivery. Having a baby is stressful, no matter how much you've looked forward to it or how much you love your child. You may not have been expecting it, but mild depression and mood swings are common in new mothers. These feelings of exhaustion, mood swings, anxiety and weepiness are normal. The thought is that baby blues are a results of shifting hormone levels right after birth. Believe it or not, you are NOT alone; most mothers experience these symptoms at some point after delivery. Take help and support from friends and family members. Reach out to your pediatrician or obstetric provider if you need advice or potentially a referral for other support.

If your symptoms don't go away after a few weeks or get worse, you may have postpartum depression or anxiety. Signs that this may be more than just the baby blues are: lack of interest in your baby, lack of concern for yourself, negative feelings or thoughts about your baby, and thoughts of death or harming yourself or your baby. Postpartum depression and anxiety are real entities and necessitate professional help. **Do not suffer in silence.** Reach out to your pediatrician or obstetric provider to seek support during this difficult time. Postpartum depression usually sets in soon after childbirth and develops gradually over a period of several months. However, it can emerge suddenly, and in some women, the first signs don't appear until months after they've given birth. Please call our office with any questions. We are here to help.