



# For the first week of life

## A parent's guide

### Is your newborn baby well?

#### A healthy newborn:

- has pink lips and a pink tongue
- has an underarm temperature between 36.8°C and 37.3°C, similar to yours
- passes urine (wee) and opens their bowels (poo) regularly
- feeds often, 8 to 12 times in 24 hours
- is quietly alert when awake and reacts to sounds and voices
- breathes a little faster than you with some short pauses
- shows signs when they're struggling and need help, like changing colour, crying, wriggling or trembling.

#### Is your newborn baby sick?

If your baby:

- stops breathing or turns blue
- has a seizure, with twitching or jerking movements of the eyes, mouth, arms or legs
- can't be woken
- doesn't notice loud noises, a bright light shining in their eyes or a gentle pinch on the arm.



#### Action

##### In hospital

**Immediately** tell your midwife or doctor, or press the call-assist button

##### At home

Phone **000**

#### Within the first week of life

If your baby:

- has yellow looking skin in the first 24 hours after birth
- hasn't fed for more than 6 hours after the first 24 hours
- hasn't had at least 1 wet and 1 dirty nappy a day after the first 24 hours
- has twitchy or jerky eye, mouth, arm or leg movements
- seems limp or floppy in the body, head, neck, arms and legs
- is breathing very fast and making grunting noises
- has an unusual cry - like a weak, high-pitched, moaning or painful cry
- has blood in their poo
- has very pale skin or is turning yellow
- their stomach (tummy) or the bottom of their chest draws in when they breathe
- is vomiting a lot - more than half the feed after each of the last 3 feeds.
- the vomit is not clear, milky or pale yellow



#### Action

##### In hospital

Tell your midwife or doctor.

##### At home

- 24-hour Maternal and Child Health Line  
Phone 13 22 29
- 24-hour Nurse-on-Call  
Phone 1300 60 60 24
- See your local doctor (GP)
- Go to a Hospital Emergency Department
- If urgent, phone **000**

Clear	Milk	Pale yellow	Mustard	Green	Green	Green	Green	Blood
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OR

- you feel that something is wrong.

**Please note:** When viewed on screen and/or downloaded and printed, the colours in the chart may vary depending on your device settings.

Reference: Morley CJ, Thornton AJ, Cole TJ, Hewson PH, Fowler MA. Baby Check: a scoring system to grade the severity of acute systemic illness in babies under 6 months old. Arch Dis Child. 1991 Jan;66(1):100-5. doi: 10.1136/adc.66.1.100.