



## **You just had a baby...now what?**

Congratulations, you just had a baby! This is my baby talk. Every pediatrician has one. It's the talk you give to new parents in the hospital. If I've taken care of your family, you've already heard it. I've been giving some version of this talk since medical school which is becoming longer and longer ago.

When you are leaving the hospital and you are thinking to yourself..."they are letting me leave...with a baby" - Remember every family thinks the same thing. Being a parent is wonderful and hard and exhausting and exhilarating...but being a baby is not so bad.

All a baby needs to do after leaving the hospital is eat, sleep, poop, pee, fight off infection and drive safely to the doctor's office for that first visit.

**Driving:** The driving part is easy. A baby's feet don't reach the pedals so she is going to be in a car seat. Your baby will have a car seat test prior to leaving the hospital to make sure she can tolerate the seat.

**Eating:** As a pediatrician, I recommend breastfeeding, and if you are going to breastfeed, the goal is to feed about every 2-3 hours for around 15 minutes on each side. This is a goal but basically you are going to be feeding on demand when your baby is hungry. Remember as odd as it sounds, the more you breastfeed the more your breastfeed. The act of breastfeeding actually helps your milk production. In the meantime, your baby is getting colostrum...sort of premilk. Work on your latch in the hospital with the lactation nurse.

If you are bottle feeding, you should make a 2 oz. bottle every 3 hours or so for feeding. Your baby will likely drink 1-2 oz. at each feeding. Whether breastfeeding or bottle feeding, you don't want to go longer than about 4 hours between feedings for the first couple of weeks

**Sleeping:** Always on her back and never when you want...typically in a bassinet in your room.

**Pooping:** I want a couple a day...they should start out black and tarry and then become green and seedy and finally yellow and seedy.



## **You just had a baby...now what?** *continued*

**Peeing:** I want three a day after the first 24 hours.

**Fighting off infection:** This one is a little tricky. You just had a baby. Stay home for a bit and rest. A newborn's immune system is not like an adult's and infections are a greater risk for them than for us. Everyone asks me when they can bring their baby to meet their extended family and friends. I think this is immeasurably important. In a world full of bad news this is the best new ever and you have an obligation to share the joy of your newborn with your communities...your family, friends, etc. How do you share your newborn with your loved ones without your loved ones sharing their germs with your baby? Well, for example, in a few weeks you might bring your newborn to your church or synagogue. Arrive late, stand in the back...hold your baby up like in the Lion King so everyone can see how beautiful she is and then leave early. Don't go to coffee hour.

**When to call the office:** We are happy to hear from you if you have any questions or concerns about your baby. However, if there is less than 1 stool a day or 3 urine diapers a day or fever > 100.4, please call the office.

**Congratulations!** When you get home and put your wonderful baby on the center of the master bed and look down and wonder "what have we done?" Know you are going to be awesome. Welcome to the club. For now, concentrate on the eating/sleeping/pooping/peeing/fighting off infection and driving to the doctor's office. We'll handle colic, kindergarten and college later.