

# My Health and Development Record



Government of  
South Australia

# My baby's first weeks

During the first days after birth, your baby has to adapt to life outside of the womb. This is a time of adjustment that most babies manage easily. Sometimes problems happen that can make your baby unwell. This guide will help you to recognise what is normal in a healthy baby, and also help you recognise if your baby is unwell or if they should be seen by a health professional.

## What does a healthy baby do?

- > Many babies are sleepy for the first 12 hours after birth, but usually they will feed at least once by 6-8 hours after birth. After 12 hours of life most babies wake and demand a feed every 3-4 hours
- > Breathes quietly and comfortably. When asleep the breathing rate is less than 60 breaths in a minute
- > Moves arms and legs, opens eyes, and responds to touch or noises by startling or crying
- > Has pink lips and tongue
- > Passes wee and poo at least once in the first 24 hours, and then several times a day for the first week
- > Babies often sneeze and have a snuffly nose. A snuffly nose can be normal if your baby can suck and feed comfortably
- > For support with parenting, breastfeeding or settling your baby, contact CaFHS.

### Parent Helpline

**1300 364 100**

(Local call cost within South Australia)

Telephone information and support any time, 7 days a week between

**7:15am – 9:15pm**

### Health Direct

**1800 022 222**

For **24 hour** medical advice

### Child and Family Health Service (CaFHS)

**1300 733 606**

Appointments Monday to Friday **9:00am – 4:30pm**

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**'When should I ask for advice?'**

## When should I ask for advice?

The main problems a baby can have in the first days – week of life are infections, low blood sugar levels, heart problems, seizures, jaundice and bowel problems.

### Call a doctor or midwife urgently if your baby has any of these:

- > Not waking up to feed for 8 or more hours
- > Is floppy or not responding normally i.e. very sleepy or difficult to wake and not kicking or moving normally
- > Has trouble feeding because of breathlessness
- > Breathing is fast (more than 60 breaths a minute when asleep)
- > You hear a grunting noise with each breath or baby is “sucking” in chest as though breathing is difficult
- > Cry is weak or unusual
- > Back arching or jerking of arms or legs
- > Skin and possibly whites of eyes look yellow in the first 24 hours (jaundice)
- > Frequent vomiting or vomit that is green or contains blood
- > No wee or poo in the first 24 hours
- > Baby is unusually warm (temperature > 38°C) or cold (temperature < 36°C) despite removing or adding clothing
- > If you are worried about your baby
- > If you or your partner are feeling overwhelmed
- > Any of these findings may indicate a serious problem and urgent assessment by your midwife, hospital doctor or GP is recommended.

### Call an ambulance: Dial 000, if your baby:

- > Stops breathing or turns blue (meantime hold baby with head down and pat his/her back firmly)
- > Has a fit/convulsion/seizure
- > Is not responding to loud noises, a bright light shone in his eyes or a gentle pinch on the arm, when they are awake.

Call your midwife urgently

(Insert Local number)

Call your GP

(Insert Local number)

Call your local hospital

(Insert Local number)

**Dial 000  
for an  
ambulance**