

4. Feeding/Nutrition of babies

Breastfeeding should start soon after delivery.

Colostrums, the thick yellow milk which comes in the first few days should invariably be given to the baby. During the first six months of age only breast milk should be given. Complementary foods along with breast milk can be given after six months.

5. Recognize the danger signs

Most mothers can recognize when the baby is ill. Seek medical help as soon as possible if the newborn's condition deteriorates. Take the baby to the health centre immediately if the baby shows any of the following danger signs...



Danger signs in newborns

Difficulty in breathing and sucking.

Jaundice.

Diarrhoea.

Pus discharge or redness around the cord.

Neck rigidity and convulsions.

When to seek medical help?

Seek medical help immediately if any of these are present in the baby:

- Refusal to feed.
- Increased drowsiness.
- High fever.
- Difficult or rapid breathing.
- Yellow staining of palms and soles.
- Umbilicus is red or discharging pus.
- Eyes are swollen and sticky or discharging pus.
- Abdominal distension or persistent vomiting.
- Abdominal movements or convulsions.
- Does not wake up for feeding (increased drowsiness).
- Cold to touch in spite of re-warming or warm in spite of undressing.



STATE HEALTH SOCIETY,
NATIONAL RURAL HEALTH MISSION,
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Essential NEWBORN Care



Newborn babies are especially vulnerable to diseases. Simple practical measures, if adopted by families will prevent avoidable disease and death in neonates. The first 7 days are crucial for survival of the child.



Three things are extremely important –

- 1 **Feeding:** The baby should be breastfed immediately after birth with colostrums. Breastfeeding protects the baby from infections and prevents bleeding in the mother.
- 2 **Cleanliness:** Bathe the child regularly. Keep the cord-stump dry and clean. Don't apply anything on it.
- 3 **Warmth:** Cover the baby with warm clothes and keep the room warm.

Under no circumstance should feeding bottles or pacifiers be used as these are the sources of infection and can cause diarrhea.

Steps in Newborn Care

1. Begin baby care soon after Conception

All pregnant women should get registered with the nearest Health centre early in pregnancy and avail at least 3 ante natal check-ups during pregnancy.

Ensure that delivery takes place in a health centre. If this is not possible ensure that only a trained person conducts the delivery.

2. Prevent Infections:

Pregnant women are given Tetanus Toxoid injection during their pregnancy period. This is necessary to prevent tetanus in the mother and the newborn.

Newborns can get infections if delivery is not conducted in a clean environment. The one

conducting the delivery (Attendant) must wash her hands with soap and water, conduct the delivery on a clean surface, use a new (unused) blade to cut the cord, use a clean thread to tie the cord and not apply anything on the cord stump.

Mothers must preferably deliver in a health centre. Even if they decide to deliver at home, mothers must make arrangements for a piece of cotton cloth for drying and wrapping the baby after delivery.

The baby should be put to breast soon after delivery. No prelacteal food like honey, water, etc. should be given. The baby must be given only breast milk during 6 months of age. The baby must not be handled by too many people. The baby should not be taken to crowded places, nor should people with any infection handle him/her.

3. Keep the Baby warm

Newborns must always be kept warm. Small babies cannot maintain their body temperature. If left unprotected they rapidly become cold and can die of hypothermia.

As soon as the baby is born it should quickly be dried especially the scalp with a clean cotton cloth.

Putting the baby to the breast soon after delivery will help in keeping the baby warm.

The baby should be protected from draughts, and should not be put under fans and in front of coolers. The baby's room should be warm enough for adults to feel just comfortable.

