

Newborn Illness - How To Recognize

Definition

- How infections and other serious diseases can present in newborns

Why Newborns Need to be Watched Closely

- Newborns are at higher risk for infections. Infections can happen at any time during the first month. Watch your baby closely for signs of illness. This is especially key during the first 7 days of life.
- Newborns who get a blood infection (sepsis) can get very sick quickly.
- The signs of serious illness in newborns can be subtle. During the early weeks of life, illness can be serious.
- Feeding is the one reliable measure of a newborn's well being. Newborns should be eating machines. If your baby isn't feeding well, call your baby's doctor. Also, call if your baby has an abrupt change in his feeding pattern. (Exception: never a good feeder, but takes enough milk and nothing has changed).
- Keeping a close eye on your baby is always the best plan. If feeding, movement and sleep is normal, your baby is likely just fine.
- If your baby looks or acts different and it's not normal, call now. Don't wait. Call your baby's doctor now for expert help.

Care Advice

1. Symptoms and Signs of Illness in a Newborn:

- Any symptoms of illness such as coughing or projectile vomiting. Vomiting bile (green color or blood) is always serious.
- Changes in feeding or not feeding well.
- Weak suck or can't suck for very long
- Sweating during feeds
- Sleeping significantly more than normal or can't wake up
- Change in muscle tone (decreased or floppy)
- Decreased movement or not moving at all
- Change in color (such as pale, bluish or gray arms and legs)
- Age under 12 weeks old with fever. (Caution: Do NOT give your baby any fever medicine before being seen unless otherwise directed by your doctor.)
- Low temperature below 96.8° F (36.0° C) rectally that does not go up with warming
- New moaning or grunting noises with each breath
- Change in cry, such as weak cry or strange cry

Call Your Doctor Back If...

- Your baby has any symptoms listed above
- Your baby starts looking or acting sick
- Your baby starts looking or acting abnormal in any way
- You think your baby needs to be seen

This handout is intended for informational purposes only and should not be used as a substitute for the care and advice of a medical professional. The accuracy of the information contained in this handout is not guaranteed and there may be variations in treatment that your doctor or nurse may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

Copyright 2000-2019 Schmitt Pediatric Guidelines LLC

Author: Barton Schmitt MD, FAAP

Provided by ClearTriage

Edited by Pediatric Associates of Austin