

When to Call Your Baby's Primary Care Provider

A quick guide

This handout is a quick guide to use when you are concerned and wondering if you should call your baby's primary care provider (PCP). Remember to post the phone number for your baby's PCP where you can find it quickly and easily!

For more details, please see these sections in your *Caring for Your Baby in the NICU* booklet:

- "Basic Baby Care"
- "Signs of Infection"
- "Signs of Breathing Problems"



It may help to write down your baby's temperature and other symptoms before you call the PCP.

Before Calling

Before you call your baby's PCP for any reason, have this information ready:

- Your baby's temperature
- How many wet diapers your baby has had in the past 12 to 24 hours
- How much more or less your baby is eating
- If your baby is throwing up or has a tender stomach
- If your baby's breathing is different than usual (be ready to explain how)

When Changing Diapers

Call your baby's PCP if you are changing your baby's diaper and:

- You see a raised bumpy rash. This rash could be on your baby's bottom, groin, or in skin folds.

- Your baby’s stool is hard or very dry. If your baby has constipation (hard stool), they may seem to strain when having bowel movements.
- Your baby’s stool is loose or watery and comes out more quickly than usual (*diarrhea*).
- Your baby’s stool is white, red, or black.
- The urine smells bad or is a dark color.
- Your baby has not had any wet diapers in the past 8 hours.

Umbilical Cord

Call your baby’s PCP if your baby still has an umbilical cord and it:

- Has a bad smell
- Is red
- Is bleeding or oozing yellow pus

Fever

Call your baby’s PCP if your baby:

- Has a fever higher than 100.4°F (38°C)
- Has a temperature lower than 97°F (36°C) and has not warmed up after 1 hour of skin-to-skin contact

Infection

Call your baby’s PCP if your baby has any of these signs of infection:

- Eye drainage
- Cough, stuffy nose, or discharge from the nose
- Unusual fussiness or suddenly having lower energy level (*lethargy*)
- Poor feeding
- Thick, white patches on gums, inside cheeks, on tongue or roof of mouth (*thrush*)

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your baby’s healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit:
206.598.4606

Breathing Problems

Call your baby’s PCP if:

- Your baby is working harder than usual to breathe.
- You see retractions, nasal flaring, grunting, wheezing, hoarse barking cough, cyanosis, or congestion (see “Signs of Breathing Problems”).