



Common Conditions

Some physical conditions are common during the first couple of weeks after birth. If you notice any of the following in your baby, contact your pediatrician.

- Abdominal distension
- Birth Injuries
- Jaundice
- Blue Baby
- Coughing
- Excessive Crying
- Lethargy & Sleepiness
- Respiratory Distress
- Umbilical Cord Problems
- Unusual Bowel Movements



Check out [healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org) for more information on these common infant conditions.

Newborn Reflexes

Healthcare providers check infant reflexes to determine if the brain and nervous system are working properly. The following are some of the normal reflexes seen in newborn babies:

Rooting Reflex- This reflex starts when the corner of the baby's mouth is stroked or touched. The baby will turn their head and open their mouth to follow and root in the direction of the stroking.

Suck Reflex- When the roof of the baby's mouth is touched, the baby will start to suck.

Moro Reflex- In response to the sound, baby throws back their head, extends arms and legs, cries, then pulls the arms and legs back in.

Tonic Neck Reflex- When baby's head is turned to one side, the arm on that side stretches out and the opposite arm bends up at the elbow.

Grasp Reflex- Stroking the palm of a baby's hand causes the baby to close his or her fingers in a grasp.

Stepping Reflex- Baby will appear to take steps or dance when held upright with their feet touching a solid surface.

NEW PARENT NEWS

The monthly newsletter of Southern Tier Health Care System

Common Newborn Conditions



Some physical conditions are common during the first couple of weeks after birth. If you notice any of the following in your baby, contact your pediatrician.

Abdominal Distension - Most babies' bellies normally stick out, especially after a large feeding. Between feedings, however, they should feel soft. If your child's abdomen feels swollen and hard, and if they have not had a bowel movement for more than one or two days or is vomiting, call your pediatrician.

Jaundice -Jaundice is caused by a buildup of bilirubin in the child's blood and causes a yellow tint to their skin and eyes. Mild jaundice is harmless. However, if you notice a sudden increase in jaundice when your baby is at home, contact your pediatrician.

Blue Baby - Babies may have mildly blue or purple hands and feet, which is usually normal. If their hands and feet turn slightly blue from cold, they should return to pink as soon as they are warm. However, persistently blue skin coloring is a sign the heart or lungs are not operating properly, and baby is not getting enough oxygen in the blood. Immediate medical attention is essential.

Coughing - Some coughing and sputtering after drinking is normal for infants, but if their coughs persistent or if they routinely gag during feedings, consult the pediatrician. These symptoms could indicate an underlying problem in the lungs or digestive tract.

Excessive Crying - You'll become accustomed to your baby's patterns of crying. If it ever sounds peculiar—such as shrieks of pain—or if it persists for an unusual length of time, it could mean a medical problem. Call the pediatrician and ask for advice.

Lethargy & Sleepiness -Every newborn spends most of their time sleeping. As long as they wake every few hours, eats well, seems content, and is alert part of the day, it's perfectly normal to sleep the rest of the time. But if they are rarely alert, do not wake up on their own for feedings, or seem too tired or uninterested to eat, you should consult your pediatrician.

Respiratory Distress - If baby seems to be breathing in an unusual manner, it is most often due to blocked nasal passage. Using saline nasal drops, followed by suctioning the mucus from the nose with a bulb syringe, may fix the problem; both are available over the counter. However, if your newborn shows any of the following warning signs, notify your pediatrician immediately:

- Fast breathing
- Retractions
- Flaring of their nose
- Grunting while breathing
- Persistent blue skin coloring



Umbilical Cord Problems - As you're caring for your baby's umbilical cord, you may notice a few drops of blood on the diaper around the time the stump falls off. This is normal, but if the cord actively bleeds, call your baby's doctor immediately. If the stump becomes infected, it will require medical treatment.

Unusual Bowel Movements -

- Meconium: After birth, the staff will watch for your baby's first urination and bowel movement to make sure they have no problem with these important tasks. It may be delayed twenty-four hours or more. The first bowel movement or two will be black or dark green and very slimy. It is meconium, a substance that fills the infant's intestines before birth. If your baby does not pass meconium in the first forty-eight hours, further evaluation is required to make sure that no problems exist in the lower bowel.
- Blood in stool: On occasion, newborns have a little blood in their bowel movements. If it occurs during the first few days, it usually means the infant has a little crack in the anus from stooling. This is generally harmless, but even so, let your pediatrician know about any signs of blood to confirm the reason, since there are other causes that require further evaluation and treatment.

Check out [healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org) for more information on these common infant conditions and consult your pediatrician with any questions.