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When to Call the Baby's Doctor

PRINT-AND-GO GUIDE

One of the toughest and most nerve-racking things for new moms is figuring out when to call the doctor. As a general rule of thumb, trust your instincts. If you suspect something is not right, you should always call the doctor. Even small changes in eating, sleeping, and crying can be signs of serious problems for newborns.

Call your pediatrician if your baby has any of the following symptoms:

- No urine in first 24 hours at home
- No bowel movement in the first 48 hours at home
- Trouble breathing, very rapid breathing (more than 60 breaths per minute) or blue lips or finger nails
- Pulling in of the ribs when breathing
- Wheezing, grunting, or whistling sounds when breathing
- Rectal temperature above 100.4° F or below 97.8° F
- Persistent cough
- Nosebleeds
- Yellow or greenish mucus in the eyes
- Pus or red skin at the base of the umbilical cord stump
- Yellow color in whites of the eye and/or skin (jaundice) that gets worse 3 days after birth
- Circumcision problems - worrisome bleeding at the circumcision site, bloodstains on diaper or wound dressing larger than the size of a grape
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea - This can be hard to detect, especially in breastfed newborns. Diarrhea often has a foul smell and can be streaked with blood or mucus. Diarrhea is usually more watery or looser than normal. Any significant increase in the number or appearance of your newborn's regular bowel movements may suggest diarrhea.
- Fewer than six wet diapers in 24 hours
- A sunken soft spot (fontanel) on the baby's head
- Refuses several feedings or eats poorly
- Hard to waken or unusually sleepy
- Extreme floppiness, lethargy, or jitters
- Crying more than usual and very hard to console

SOURCES: American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association, and March of Dimes

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