

# BAByTalk

A Publication for Parents from Boys Town Pediatrics



## Your Newborn and What to Expect at the Hospital

**F**or nine months you have been preparing for the arrival of your newborn. You have read all sorts of baby books, decorated the nursery, purchased all the necessities and have chosen a pediatrician. With all these preparations – not to mention the anxiety of bringing a new baby into this world – you may not have given much thought to what will happen in the hospital during the first few days of your baby's life.

### *Baby's First Exam*

Within the first few hours after birth, your baby will go through a thorough exam. Doctors and nurses will measure his or her weight, length and head circumference and will monitor his or her heart rate, respiratory rate, temperature and blood sugar levels. Your baby will receive special eye drops to prevent infection, a vitamin K shot to prevent excessive bleeding and a hepatitis B vaccine.

### *Feedings*

Your baby will be encouraged to start breast feeding shortly after delivery. During your hospital stay a lactation nurse, who has extra training in breast feeding, will meet with you to guide and help you with breast feeding. Formula fed babies will usually get their first bottle during the first few hours after birth. The nurses and doctors will monitor how your baby does with feedings and keep track of how often they urinate and stool.



### *Important Tests*

Your baby will also undergo several simple, yet very important tests and procedures before leaving the hospital.

### *Apgar Test*

Within a minute or so after birth, your baby's condition will be evaluated using something called an Apgar score. This assessment helps doctors and nurses to quickly evaluate your newborn's physical condition and detect any problems that may require extra medical or emergency care. His heart rate, breathing, activity and muscle tone, grimace response and color will be individually scored as 0 (lowest score possible), 1 or 2 (highest score possible). Each of the scores are added together to give the total Apgar score.

All babies are scored routinely at one minute of age and again at five minutes of age. Most babies will score 8 at one minute and 9 at five minutes. A perfect score of 10 is rare. If the score is 7 or less, further intervention is given by the medical team. Most often babies will need some oxygen for a minute or two. The Apgar score is then reassessed at ten minutes of age.

### *Newborn Screening Test*

Newborn screening is a simple blood test that checks for treatable diseases which can appear early in life, but may not be immediately apparent after birth. If certain diseases are detected early,

preventive treatment can be administered before serious damage occurs.

Typically, a technician will prick baby's heel to gather a sample of his or her blood. The blood will then be sent for testing to look for several disorders including:

- Phenylketonuria (PKU)
- Congenital Primary Hypothyroidism
- Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia
- Biotinidase Deficiency
- Galactosemia
- Sickle Cell Anemia and other Hemoglobinopathies
- Medium Acyl Co-A
- Cystic Fibrosis

These tests are required by the Nebraska State Law. An optional panel of approximately twenty tests is available. Detailed information about these tests is given to you in the hospital.

Your newborn's test results will be reported to the state health department. If your newborn tests positive for one of these disorders, the health department will notify your doctor right away and you will be asked to have your newborn retested to confirm the results. If the results are again positive, treatment is started.

### ***Newborn Hearing Screening***

Your newborn will have his or her hearing tested before leaving the hospital or within the first three weeks of life. The tests are simple and painless and take only a few minutes. While at the hospital, you will be visited by a hearing representative who explains how the screening works and will most likely conduct the testing at your bedside. At some hospitals, you and your baby may be taken to another room where testing equipment is located.



### ***Education***

Throughout your hospital stay, the medical staff will be teaching you important safety information about your newborn. You will be able to attend a bath class, receive information on car seats and learn to

position your baby on his or her back to sleep – avoiding additional blankets, pillows, bumper pads or heavy quilts to prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Your doctor will let you know when you need to be seen for the first office visit.

### ***Circumcision***

Finally, before going home and depending on your wishes, your baby boy will be circumcised. When the penis is circumcised, the foreskin is surgically removed. There are a couple of different methods for circumcision. Talk with your pediatrician or obstetrician before your baby is born to discuss which method he or she uses.

### ***Once You Arrive Home***

While you are at the hospital there will be plenty of help on hand to answer your questions and assist in the care of your newborn. However, once you arrive home you are sure to have further questions or concerns. For immediate answers, log on to the Boys Town Pediatrics website at [www.boystownpediatrics.org](http://www.boystownpediatrics.org) and click on the Peds Advisor. Here, you will find a wealth of information on common illnesses, colic, breast feeding, bottle feeding, baby's first checkup and much more.

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**402-498-1234**

**[www.boystownpediatrics.org](http://www.boystownpediatrics.org)**

*For additional information on this subject and other baby-related topics, visit [boystownpediatrics.org](http://boystownpediatrics.org).*