

15. If the infant does not respond to any noise or show an eye-to-eye contact or does not move his/her limbs freely, then consult a paediatrician.
16. If the newborn is asleep in a separate cot, take care of his/her comfort and safety. Ensure that he/she is padded well to avoid any injury. If the infant is in the same bed, ensure that the parents do not roll over him/her unwittingly or any bedsheet/bedcover/blanket/pillow does not lie upon the infant's nose/mouth and stop the normal breathing.
17. Keep the bedroom clean and use clean and ironed bedsheet or bedcover. Don't use any furry toys in the bedroom. Maintain the temperature around 28°C for the newborn. Keep the newborn free from mosquitoes by using a mosquito net. Do not use pillows containing feathers. Mattresses/pillows/bedsheets should be kept dust-free by dusting and exposing them regularly to sunlight, every alternate day for an hour or two.
18. Use cotton diapers only. Avoid disposable plastic diapers or self-retaining diapers. In our tropical climates, they may not be the best option for our infants. Cotton diapers should be washed with ordinary soap and water and reused only after adequate drying.



19. **Umbilical Cord Care:** Usually the umbilical cord falls off within 7 days. Keep cleaning the cord with alcohol swab (disposable) and use antibiotic powder for 3 days after it has fallen off.



**In case, you spot any of the following distress signs, contact the doctor immediately:**

1. Fast breathing with or without cough
2. Bluish discolouration of feet
3. Fever
4. Vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal distention, poor feeding
5. Poor activity, lethargy or excessive sleeping
6. Abnormal movements of extremities, eyes and lips
7. Any discolouration of the skin
8. Rashes

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## INFANT HEALTH AND CARE

*Read on to find out.*



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## Why is it important to know about infant health and care?

Infants or newborns have distinct needs of their own that are entirely different from those of an older child or an adult. Any newly born baby goes through many changes during the first year itself. For first time parents, especially mothers, taking care of their newborn is an unknown realm of experience and can become overwhelming or very hectic.

Life with the newborn can become an enjoyable or extraordinary experience with the right information. At HCL Healthcare, we have listed below some dos and don'ts as a guide towards the right infant care.



## Dos and Don'ts for infant healthcare

1. Mother should breastfeed her newborn for 3 months.
2. Breastfeeding should start as soon as possible. More sucking produces more milk.
3. Ensure that no water, juice, pacifier or gripe water is given to the newborn. No ghutti/ Bonnisan or honey should be given. No usage of bottle for feeding.
4. Feed on demand (not by the clock) of the infant. Do not feed before 2 hours even if he/she cries (usually babies cry more at night, your nipple only acts as a pacifier.)

5. Make sure the newborn burps by placing him/her on the mother's shoulder for 5 - 10 minutes.

6. The newborn may have stools immediately after feeding. They may be passed in small amounts, 4 - 5 times during and after each feed. These 4 - 5 loose stools are counted as one and a normal act due to infancy. The infant may also pass stools a number of times in a day.

7. On the contrary, the infant may pass stool once a day or even once in two days which may be a normal act. It may be due to sluggish intrinsic gastrointestinal motility.

## Dos and Don'ts for general infant care

1. Wash the newborn's hair daily. Use glycerinated soap and oil only twice a week.

2. Avoid applying kaajal/surma to the newborn.

3. Use a cap particularly during the winter months.

4. Do not put anything inside the nose/ear of the newborn. No buds/no decongestants.

5. If the infant suffers from cough then report immediately.

6. Avoid Agarbatti/smoke producing substance near the infant.

7. For the mother, bathing at least once a day is a must.



8. Before feeding, clean the breast area first by boiled cotton and later with dry sterilised cotton.

9. Sterilised cotton can be prepared by keeping some cotton pieces in a container pressure cooker with some water. Cotton in the container is tightly enclosed by the cover so that it does not come into contact with anything. The cotton is sterilised and placed in by a pair of tongs/forceps which are also boiled in the cooker so that they get sterilised by heat. The mother's breast should be cleaned with this sterilised cotton before each feed.

10. After feeding the newborn, let him/her burp and then put to rest in the right side position with the head a little raised.

11. The infant may cry excessively, particularly in the evening. See if he/she is wet, over-clothed, excessively warm, hungry or in an uncomfortable position in the bed. If all these are satisfactory, the reason could be infantile colic which is common during the first three months of life, and only improves gradually.



12. Bathe the infant with boiled cooler water daily. Do not use geyser or unsterile water. Gently massage with oil every day.

13. Make sure that the infant is exposed to sunlight by light traversing through a glass window pane. Use cotton clothing only, including cotton diapers.

14. After voiding/defecation, clean him/her with water in a front to back motion. After drying, if any powder is to be put in the groin area, use only a thin film with the help of a powder puff avoiding genitalia, as it may cause irritation and infection.