



Keeping Your Newborn Healthy: What to Expect Soon after Delivery

Soon after birth, your baby will get important health checks and treatments to stay healthy in the years ahead.

Protection Against Infection



Erythromycin Eye Ointment
Protects against eye infections and blindness.



Hepatitis B Vaccine
Protects against liver disease, including liver cancer.



RSV Antibody
Protects against serious lung infections in babies.

Early Screenings



Heart Disease Check
Screens for serious heart defects that can be life-threatening.



Newborn Screening
Looks for more than 80 conditions babies can be born with. Finding problems early can save lives.



Bilirubin Test
Checks for jaundice, which can cause brain damage.



Hearing Test
Helps identify early hearing loss.

Protection Against Bleeding



Vitamin K
Protects against life-threatening bleeding in a baby's brain or other organs.

Scan QR codes for information on:

What to Expect
in the Delivery
Room:



Newborn
Screening:



Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

Why does my baby need antibiotic eye ointment?

This medicine helps prevent serious eye infections. These infections can cause vision problems or even blindness. It is safe and there are no known risks.

Why is the Hepatitis B vaccine recommended at birth?

The hepatitis B virus can harm the liver and may even cause liver failure or cancer. Most babies who catch it— 9 out of 10 —develop lifelong infection, and 1 in 4 dies early. Hepatitis B can spread to babies during childbirth. Babies can also get it from other family members, friends, or caregivers who don't know they're infected. Hepatitis B can survive on surfaces for 7 days. Even a tiny amount of blood can spread the virus from nail clippers, files, toothbrushes, earrings, or other sharp objects. This is why protecting your baby at birth with this safe vaccine is so important. Since the vaccine was recommended for newborns in 1991, childhood hepatitis B infections in the U.S. have dropped by more than 95 percent.

What is RSV and why should my baby receive this antibody?

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is a common virus that can make babies very sick. It is the number one reason babies under 1 year of age end up in the hospital. RSV can cause serious lung infections like pneumonia. If your baby is born between October and March, they can get an RSV antibody in the first few days of life. This antibody is safe and helps protect your baby from RSV. It can lower your baby's chance of going to the hospital because of RSV by more than 80 percent. If you did not get the RSV vaccine during pregnancy, ask your baby's doctor about getting an RSV antibody for your baby.

Why do babies need a Vitamin K shot?

Your baby is born with very low levels of Vitamin K, which puts them at risk for life threatening bleeding. This bleeding can happen suddenly inside the brain or other organs during the first days of life. The risk stays high for the first two months. If a baby does not get Vitamin K and bleeding happens later, damage to their organs can't be undone. The Vitamin K shot is the best and safest way to protect newborns from bleeding. Vitamin K taken by mouth does not work well to prevent this bleeding.

What should I know about Newborn Screening?

Newborn Screening is a simple blood test done with a small heel prick. It checks for more than 80 rare but usually manageable genetic conditions babies can be born with. Finding these conditions early helps your baby's provider start treatment right away. Screening can prevent serious, long-term problems for your baby.

Why do babies get hearing screens at birth?

Some babies are born with hearing problems. Finding these problems early helps babies and their families get support right away to prevent delays in learning and development. A newborn hearing screen is simple and usually done while the baby is sleeping.

What is the critical congenital heart disease test?

Heart disease screening after birth helps find serious heart and lung problems. Your baby gets screened by checking their oxygen level(s) on their hand or foot using a skin sensor or sticker. This test can catch heart disease early and prevent infant death.

Why is jaundice screening important?

Bilirubin is a yellow waste product made when red blood cells break down. Your baby's liver is still maturing, so it can't get rid of bilirubin very well. The build-up of bilirubin can cause your baby to have a yellowish tint to their skin or eyes called jaundice. Too much bilirubin can cause serious brain damage. Your baby will be checked for jaundice with a small skin scanner or a heel prick blood test. If the level is high, treatment can help clear the bilirubin and keep your baby safe.

Scan QR code for more
information on jaundice:

