

New parent concerns: when to call



Are there any times when Fenway doesn't want me to call?

Nope. Fenway always want parents to call if they're worried about what's going on. Please pick up the phone if you feel something needs immediate attention (like high fever or breathing issues). Our nurses and on-call docs can give great advice and support when emergencies happen. If you think the issue doesn't require immediate attention (hello, runny nose and diaper rash), we'd prefer you wait until regular office hours to call.

What kind of fevers do I have to worry about?

Any fever over 100.4 rectally in the first 3 months of a baby's life is an emergency. (We sometimes make an exception if a fever develops within 24 hours after an infant's first set of immunizations.) An infant's immune system is not ready to handle an infection on its own. If your child feels warm, take the temperature rectally. If the temperature is above 100.4, call Fenway immediately so we can help you decide what to do.

What about poop—how much is normal?

A baby's stool or poop patterns are about as varied as the weather. After the first few weeks of life, it's perfectly normal for a breastfed baby to go seven times a day or once every seven days; formula-fed babies might have a bit less variation. Newborn stool can be many different colors, but you should get it checked out if it's white or bloody. Big stool changes in a baby with a fever or a newborn that can't be consoled are worth a call or visit to Fenway. Call us if you have any doubts or concerns!

Is it safe to go out, travel or visit family/friends?

Yes! It's ok to take your new baby outside or to visit friends and relatives. Hand washing is the most important part of preventing infections. Make sure to bring everything you need including your diaper bag, change of clothes for the baby, blanket and alcohol based hand wash. If someone is sick it's best to probably not let them hold your new one. The first few weeks are a time when your baby's immune system is growing.

Spit-up and reflux: what's the difference?

It's normal for some milk or formula to come back up the way it went down. Reflux and spit-up are different names for the same thing. Spit-up or reflux is only dangerous if it stops normal weight gain and growth in your baby. It sometimes happens when there is more milk in a baby's stomach than it can hold. Slowing down, frequent burping, and less milk spread out over more feedings can sometimes help. In 99 percent of kids, reflux will be totally gone by 18 months.

The difference between spit-up and vomit is frequency, not forcefulness. Spit-up can absolutely fly across the room and is usually related to feeding. If your baby is vomiting with a gastrointestinal virus it will come every 30 or 45 minutes regardless of feeding.

Will I spoil my baby if I pick her up every time she cries?

No! It's not possible! Newborns are not smart enough to trick you with crying. It is good to soothe crying babies and try to figure out and meet their needs. Newborn babies can't be spoiled. Holding them and responding to them is good for their development. That doesn't mean that you need to respond immediately to every cry.

As your baby gets older and you get to know them better, your response time can lengthen. Using reassuring body language, soothing speech or singing can often help. By delaying, you'll help a baby learn how to self-soothe. By six months old, many babies are smarter and may start to cry on demand or cry for things they don't need. If your infant is inconsolable for an hour and has a fever, rash, vomiting, a swollen belly, or anything else unusual, call Fenway as soon as possible.

You know your baby best.
If you think something isn't right, always check with us!