



The Pregnancy **HUB**

A BIRTH PARENT'S GUIDE:

Ways to Care for Your Baby Who May Have Been Exposed to Substances During Your Pregnancy

Create a Calm Space

- Your baby may find it easier to be fed, soothed and cared for in a quieter space
- Ways to create a calm space for you and your baby:
 - **Reduce Noise:** Turn TV's, radios and phones off or to silent and avoid noisy spaces. Use a gentle, quiet voice, especially before picking your baby up
 - **Low Lighting:** Turn the lights down low if possible, or use a lamp to light the room softly
 - **Swaddling:** Your baby may enjoy being swaddled and you may notice that this reduces the amount of time your baby cries, keeps them more calm and helps them to sleep better



Vertical (Up and Down) Rocking

- Vertical Rocking may help to settle your baby and may help them sleep better.
- **How to Vertical Rock:**
 - Swaddle your baby
 - Pick your baby up and fold their arms across their chest
 - Support your baby's head upright by placing their chin and arms in one hand
 - Hold your baby's bum with your other hand
 - Bring your baby's head slightly forward
 - Slowly and smoothly rock your baby up and down – be very gentle and make sure not to shake your baby



Provide Skin-to-Skin

- Skin-to-skin can calm your baby, strengthen the bond you have with your baby, increase your milk supply, and/or improve sleep patterns.
- Tips for safe skin-to-skin for you and your baby:
 - **Be Alert:** If you feel drowsy then it is safer to have your baby sleep in a crib or have someone else care for them.
 - **Positioning Your Baby:**
 - Your baby's bare chest is directly on your bare chest
 - Your baby's neck is straight with their head tilted slightly up (sniffing position) and turned to the side
 - Their legs are bent
 - Cover your baby with a blanket that does not cover their face



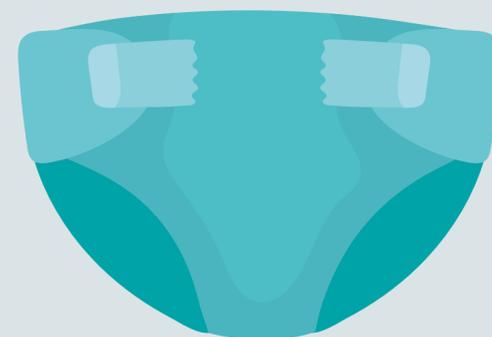
Help Your Baby Feed Better

- Your baby may have difficulty feeding. This could include issues with sucking, feeling hungry all the time, spitting up, “fussing” during bottle feeding, and incomplete feeds.
- **Strategies to help support your baby’s feeding:**
 - Respond quickly to hunger cues
 - Feed often without any limits placed on time or amount
 - Swaddle your baby during feeds to keep a good feeding posture
 - A pacifier before and between feeds may help calm your baby and coordinate their suck/swallow reflex
 - If bottle feeding, let your baby pause and rest regularly
- *If you are breastfeeding and use substances, talk to your healthcare provider about harm reduction and breastfeeding*



Taking Care of Your Baby’s Skin

- Your baby’s skin may become red, start bleeding, or have a rash due to uncontrolled movements and diarrhea.
- **Strategies that may help to limit skin breakdown:**
 - Swaddling, vertical rocking, and skin-to-skin
 - Use soft clothing and linens – hand mitts may also be used
- **Strategies that may help to limit diaper rash:**
 - Change your baby’s diaper often and allow your baby to be diaper free at some points throughout day
 - Clean diaper area with a washcloth and warm water – if using baby wipes ensure you are using ones for sensitive skin
 - Air dry diaper area and apply a thin layer of silicone-based cream before putting on another diaper



Help Support Your Baby with their Sleep & Body Activities

- Your baby may be jittery, uncoordinated and their arms and legs may be stiff and difficult to move. Your baby may also have difficulties with their natural body activities such as sleeping, breathing, and going to the bathroom.
- **Strategies that may be helpful to support your baby:**
 - Gentle vertical rocking or swaddling
 - Be gentle when holding your baby
 - Hold your baby in a C-position to resemble the fetal position
 - Allow uninterrupted naps and sleeps – if possible, try to avoid waking up your baby if they are sleeping peacefully
 - Use a gentle, quiet voice, especially before picking your baby up
 - A pacifier may help to self-soothe



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