

What Happens to Baby After Birth?

The Birth Wright approach to newborn care procedures follows many of the guidelines set forth by Baby-Friendly USA, Inc. which specializes in helping hospitals succeed in helping Mothers succeed in breastfeeding. At the core of this philosophy is the belief that **the first hour of a newborn's life is an important and special time**. This window of time is best spent with Mother and baby bonding and establishing breastfeeding with little or no other procedures occurring that may interrupt this process. That is why Birth Wright recommends that parents ask for most newborn care procedures to be delayed at least one hour after birth, so long as the baby appears healthy and stable.

The following list is meant to inform and prepare parents for what choices they can make in the hospital. It is **not meant to tell parents what decision they should make**.

Immediate vs. Delayed Cord Clamping: Most providers have been trained to cut the umbilical cord immediately or very soon after delivery, however, numerous studies now show that delaying this procedure by about 5 mins or more can have significant health benefits for babies. For more information read:

<http://www.scienceandsensibility.org/?p=5730>

Immediate skin-to-skin contact vs. separation: In the majority of U.S. hospitals today, immediately following delivery, babies are separated from their mothers and placed under a warmer where they are then easily examined and evaluated. However, numerous studies show that babies *and Mothers* benefit greatly from immediate skin-to-skin contact, even after Cesarean delivery. For more information on the benefits of early skin-to-skin contact read the following article:

<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/806325>

Erythromycin Eye Drops: These eye drops are given to all newborns to prevent the possibility of them developing a severe eye infection caused by the presence of gonorrhea or chlamydia in the birth canal. While there do not seem to be many risk associated with all babies receiving this treatment, some evidence suggests that the universal administration of Erythromycin to newborns is unnecessary and is possibly not without risk:

<http://evidencebasedbirth.com/is-erythromycin-eye-ointment-always-necessary-for-newborns/>

Hepatitis B Vaccine: Hep B is an extremely serious blood-born disease that can be acquired at birth if the baby's Mother Hep B positive. For babies who's Mothers are not Hep B positive, the chances of them acquiring Hep B in the first years of life are extremely low. Due to the seriousness of the disease, it is standard in most hospitals to administer this vaccine to all newborns immediately after birth. The need for this immediate administration is debatable in instances where the Mother of baby is not Hep B positive AND when parents understand the importance of having their child

receive this vaccination at some point in their child's lives. For more information read: <http://www.immunize.org/birthdose/pickerin.htm>

**This is a hot topic among scholars and there are many different opinions out there. To make a truly informed decision we recommend you read several articles on the subject.*

Vitamin K Injection: Vitamin K is a naturally occurring vitamin in the human body that is responsible for blood clotting. For reason not understood by science, when babies are born, they have very low levels of Vitamin K in their systems. Vitamin K naturally does not start developing in a baby's body until around day 7 of their life. This natural delay does not normally cause any problems in a newborn's life. However, for reasons little understood, some babies develop a disease known as Vitamin K deficiency bleeding (VKDB), which can lead to serious injury or death. The only known preventative for this rare disease is the administration of Vitamin K to all newborns. There is little known risk to receiving the Vitamin K Injection, however some parents worry that this is an unnecessary procedure that goes against nature's design. Studies show that the shot does not lose any effectiveness if delayed for up to 12 hours after birth. For more information read:

<http://evidencebasedbirth.com/evidence-for-the-vitamin-k-shot-in-newborns/>

Hearing Screen: The hearing screen is an optional test that can be performed on your baby while he or she is asleep. It is non-invasive, carries little to no risk, and is merely a test that looks for early indications of hearing problems in your baby.

Newborn Bathing: It is standard for the nurse to give your baby a bath while in the hospital. This is a procedure that some parents choose to decline for personal reasons such as wanting to give baby the first bath at home, fear of soap reaction, not wanting to separate from baby during the bath process, or not wanting baby's smell to change (studies on bonding support this). There are very little scholarly articles written on the subject. Birth Wright does recommend that if there are any significant difficulties or delays in breastfeeding, that the newborn bath be postponed as to not over stimulate the baby and keep the focus on breastfeeding and bonding.

Circumcision: This is an extremely controversial topic that is best researched extensively if parents are trying to make an informed decision. In a nutshell, studies indicate that there are little to no medical benefits to circumcision in populations with access to good hygiene routines and low risk of sexually transmitted diseases. There are some rare risks associated with the procedure including botched surgery and excessive bleeding. Some parents worry that the procedure is too traumatic to be done on the first day of life and may hinder breastfeeding efforts. Circumcision rates vary state by state, but overall in the United States today, just a little over half of all boys are circumcised. If parents do decide to circumcise, it is good to know that you have the option to wait a few days or weeks to have the procedure done (however check with your insurance about coverage of delayed circumcision). It may be beneficial to wait until after day 7 so that the baby's natural Vitamin K levels are established and so that lots of uninterrupted time has been dedicated to breastfeeding and bonding. Here is one good article on the subject:

<http://www.sciencebasedmedicine.org/new-aap-policy-on-circumcision/>

