

family health



Fall 2005

questions & answers

Q. Can the flu shot give you the flu?

A. No. The viruses in the flu shot aren't active, so you can't get the flu by being vaccinated. You might get a sore arm, however. Or you might run a low fever for a day or two. But these side effects are minor when compared to the flu itself. So a flu shot is in your best interest. The best time to get your flu shot is in October or November.

Q. Is it OK to give my baby water?

A. Until your baby eats solid foods, your baby will get all the water that's necessary from breast milk or formula.

That's unless your baby is ill, especially with a fever. Then, giving your baby water may be a good idea. Talk to your doctor to find out. For ill breastfed

babies, breast milk is the best fluid.



Bringing baby home

After nine months of waiting, your baby has finally arrived. Now it's time to bring your newborn home.

Do you feel a little nervous? Then you're like most parents. Be patient with yourself: Every day your confidence will grow.

Knowing what to expect can also put you at ease. Your baby:

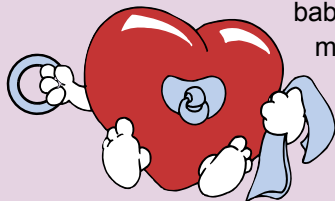
- Will be hungry very often—every few hours, in fact.
- Will like to sleep—perhaps for most of the day at first.

- May be fussy and cry a lot. That's the only way your baby can let you know he or she needs something—such as comforting or a clean diaper.
- May surprise you with his or her appearance. Newborns' heads may seem very large and their skin wrinkly and red or pink. All this is normal.
- Needs to feel secure and loved. So smile at, hold and talk to your baby as much as possible.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Si necesita esta información en español, llame al 1-800-391-2000.

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New moms Take care of yourself

Bathing, rocking and round-the-clock feedings—new babies need a lot of care.

But if you're a new mother, you need care too.

After all, your body is still recovering from pregnancy and birth. You are probably very tired. Maybe you have cramps and bleeding. Your legs and feet may be swollen. And your breasts may be tender or leak milk.

You may have a lot of thoughts and feelings to sort through. At times you might feel happy or excited. At other times you may feel stressed or sad.

These are normal changes after having a baby. And they are good reasons to take extra care of yourself.



Here are some things you can do.

- Get as much rest as you can. Try to lie down or sleep when your baby sleeps. And only do what must be done—now isn't the time to try to keep a spotless house or take on big projects.

Visit your doctor. Checkups aren't just for your baby.

- Prop your feet up when you can. This may help keep swelling down.

- Use pads, not tampons, to soak up leaking blood.
- Drink lots of water.
- Eat healthy foods like fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Let friends and family pitch in. It's OK to ask for help with cleaning, laundry, meals or baby care.
- Visit your doctor. Checkups aren't just for your baby. Your doctor will probably schedule a checkup for you within four to six weeks after your baby's birth.

Sources: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; National Women's Health Information Center

Depression and pregnancy

For many women, pregnancy is a happy time. But for others, the weeks and months leading up to a baby's birth are filled with sadness.

These women don't just have a "blue mood." They have an illness called depression.

Watch for these clues

Pregnancy has ups and downs, of course. Mood swings are normal.

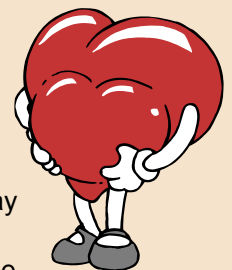
But the following signs may mean depression, especially if

they last longer than two weeks:

- A sad mood most of the day nearly every day.
- Loss of interest in things you like to do.
- Feeling guilty, hopeless or worthless.
- Thinking about death or harming yourself.
- Feeling very tired or not having energy.
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits.
- Trouble thinking and making choices.
- Aches and pains that don't get better with treatment.

What to do

If you think you might be depressed, talk with your doctor. You may need to take medicine or see a counselor.



On the bright side, treatment can help you feel better now and later. It might even help keep depression away after you have your baby.

Remember, you don't have to handle depression on your own.

Fever dos and don'ts

Here is a list of dos and don'ts for fever treatment.

Dos

- Take off extra clothing and blankets.
- Keep the room cool.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Sit in a tepid (not hot or cold) bath.
- Give acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen to children older than 6 months. Read the dosage carefully.

Don'ts

- Don't use aspirin to treat a fever with flulike symptoms. Aspirin can cause Reye's syndrome (RS).

RS is a deadly disease that attacks all the body organs but mainly the brain and liver. It affects children more often than adults.

What causes RS is unknown, but it is seen most often with the use of salicylate medicines like aspirin.

- Don't use rubbing alcohol to bring down a fever.
- Don't take a cold or ice bath without talking to a health care provider first. Quick changes in body temperature can cause seizures.



Feeling feverish?

A fever is the body's way of fighting illness. Normal body temperature is 98.6 F. You can call a fever a "fever" if the reading on the thermometer is at least 100.4 F.

Always keep a thermometer handy. You can't detect fever by touching the skin. The skin can be hot while the body core is normal.

Low to mild fevers can be taken care of at home. See "Dos and Don'ts" article for more facts.

When to get help

Call your doctor or the 24-hour advice nurse at **1-800-391-2000** if:

- Your infant (younger than 3 months) has a fever of 100.4 F.
- Your child (older than 3 months) has a fever of more than 102 F.

Seek emergency care right away if an infant or child has a fever and also has:

- Seizures.
 - A stiff neck.
 - A bad headache.
 - Trouble breathing.
 - Extreme irritability.
 - Problems walking.
 - Blue lips, tongue and nails.
 - Limpness and refusal to move.
 - Crying without stopping for many hours.
 - A bulging soft spot on your infant's head.
 - A leaning-forward stance and/or drooling.
 - A rash or purple spots that look like bruises on the skin (that were not there before the child got sick).
- Adults should also seek emergency care if they have a fever along with these symptoms.
- Adults with fevers more than 102 F should call their doctor or the advice nurse at **1-800-391-2000**.

When an earache might be trouble

Ear infections are part of life for kids. But that doesn't mean you should ignore a child's earache.

When a child has ear pain—especially with fever, trouble hearing or fluid coming from the

ear—call a doctor. Being fussy or tugging at an ear might be signs that a young child's ear hurts.

Sometimes doctors wait for ear infections to get better on their own. Other times, they'll give your child antibiotics.

The doctor might also suggest:

- Medicine, such as Children's Motrin or Children's Tylenol.

- A warm heating pad.
- Ear drops.

To prevent ear problems:

- Breastfeed new babies for at least six months.
- Keep your child away from tobacco smoke.
- Ask a doctor about a shot that may help.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics



Think you have an emergency?



If you think you have an emergency, ask yourself, "Do I have a problem that needs care right away?" or "Can I wait until tomorrow to see my doctor?"

If you are still not sure, it is always a good idea to call our nurse advice line at **1-800-391-2000**. The line is open 24 hours a day. And interpreters are available.

Our nurses can help you know what to do. They may tell you:

- To go to the emergency room.
- To go to an urgent care center.
- To make a next-day visit with your doctor.
- How to take care of yourself at home.

Their advice can help you avoid waiting for long hours in an emergency room to be seen.

People who go to emergency rooms for things that are not emergencies add to the waiting time. This is not fair to people who really have emergencies. So if you just aren't sure whether you need to go to the emergency room, call us at **1-800-391-2000**.

If you have a real emergency, don't wait. Go to the nearest emergency room. Some examples of emergencies are:

- Chest pains.
- Problems breathing.
- Poisoning.
- Heavy or uncontrollable bleeding.
- Convulsions.
- Unconsciousness.
- Labor pains.

If you do not have an emergency,

it may be better to wait to be seen by your doctor. **Some examples of non-emergencies are:**

- A cough.
- A cold.
- Flu.
- An earache.
- Pinkeye.
- A runny nose.
- A low-grade fever.

Your doctor's office is the best place for you to get your health care. Your doctor is also called a primary care provider (PCP). Your PCP knows you better than an emergency room doctor.

If you are having trouble getting to your PCP, call us. We can help with that too! We are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

We are here to help. Just call **1-800-391-2000**.

Let us help with your health care needs. Let us get you to the best place for your care without having to wait in an emergency room for hours needlessly.

You can make a difference!

If you are a Kern Family Health Care member, or you are the parent or guardian of a child who is, you have a say about your health care.

Join Kern Family Health Care's Public Policy/Community Advisory Committee (PP/CAC).

You will have a chance to talk with decision



makers. Voice your concerns and ideas for improving the system. Become a leader. Meet with others who care about the community, just like you.

The PP/CAC meets at KFHC for 1½ hours during the lunch hour every three months. Kern Family Health Care can help with transportation expenses and child care for the meetings.

If you're interested in serving and representing your health care concerns, please call us at **(661) 664-5122** for more information.

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