



10 THINGS

I WISH EVERY NEW
PARENT KNEW

FROM A NURSE & MUM



A LITTLE NOTE BEFORE WE BEGIN

Becoming a parent is wonderful, but it can also feel overwhelming. Suddenly there are so many opinions, so much information and a tiny person you're trying your very best to understand.

As a nurse, I've spent years caring for babies and supporting families through some of their earliest days together. But becoming a mum myself taught me something completely different: knowing about babies and taking your own baby home are two very different things.

I've had the worries, the sleepless nights, the endless questions and those moments of wondering, “Is this normal?”

This guide brings those two parts of me together — the nurse and the mum.

I've put together 10 things I wish every new parent knew: practical information, gentle reassurance and some of the things I've learned both professionally and through motherhood.

You don't need to have everything figured out.

You're learning your baby, and your baby is learning you.

With care,

The Neonatal Nurse Mum

This guide is for general information and support and does not replace individual medical advice. If you are concerned about your baby, please seek advice from a healthcare professional.

1. YOU DON'T NEED TO KNOW EVERYTHING STRAIGHT AWAY

No matter how much you prepare for a baby, there will be things you don't know — and that's completely normal.

In those first days and weeks, you're getting to know a whole new little person. You'll begin to recognise their sounds, their feeding cues, the way they like to be held and the little things that help them settle.

Some days you'll feel confident. Other days you might question everything you're doing.

Parenthood isn't about having all the answers. It's about learning, responding and growing together.

Ask questions. Accept help when you need it. And give yourself time.

Your confidence won't necessarily arrive the day your baby does. It grows with you.



FROM ONE MUM TO ANOTHER

You may receive a lot of advice — sometimes without asking for it! Take what is helpful, leave what isn't, and remember that nobody is getting to know your baby quite like you are.

2. NEWBORN FEEDING ISN'T ALWAYS PREDICTABLE

Newborn babies usually need to feed little and often. Their feeding pattern may change from one day to the next — and it doesn't always follow the clock.

Whether your baby is breastfed, formula fed, combination fed or having expressed milk, learning to recognise their early feeding cues can help you respond before they become very hungry.

Early cues may include stirring, bringing their hands towards their mouth, opening their mouth, turning their head or searching for something to suck.

Crying is usually a late feeding cue.

There may also be times when your baby wants to feed much more frequently than usual. Breastfed babies, in particular, may cluster feed — sometimes wanting several feeds close together.

Rather than focusing only on the clock, get to know **your baby's cues, feeding pattern and signs that feeding is going well.**

If feeding is painful, your baby is difficult to wake for feeds, is feeding much less than usual, or you're worried about how much they're taking, ask your midwife, health visitor or another appropriate healthcare professional for support.

NURSE'S NOTE

Feeding doesn't have to look exactly the same every day. What matters is looking at the whole picture — how your baby feeds, their wet and dirty nappies, their weight and how well they appear.

If something doesn't feel right, ask for help.



3. NEWBORNS ARE SURPRISINGLY NOISY

Newborn babies can make an incredible variety of sounds — even when they're perfectly well. Some of them can be quite surprising when you hear them for the first time!

ACHOO!

Sneezing can be common as babies clear their tiny nasal passages.

HIC!

Hiccups are very common in newborns and usually don't bother them.

GRUNT...

You may hear grunts and little noises, particularly during sleep or when passing wind or poo.

SNUFFLE...

Newborn noses are tiny, so normal breathing can sometimes sound surprisingly snuffly.

SQUEAK!

Little squeaks, sighs and other unusual noises can all be part of getting to know your baby's soundtrack.

WHEN TO GET HELP

If your baby is persistently grunting with each breath, working hard to breathe, breathing very fast, having pauses in breathing, is unusually sleepy or difficult to wake, or their lips or skin look blue, grey or unusually pale, seek urgent medical advice.

4. CRYING IS COMMUNICATION

Your baby's cry is one of the ways they communicate with you. Sometimes the reason is obvious — and sometimes it takes a little detective work.



FROM ONE MUM TO ANOTHER

You don't have to “fix” every cry. Sometimes your baby simply needs you to be there — holding them, comforting them and helping them feel safe.

5. NEWBORN SLEEP DOESN'T LOOK LIKE ADULT SLEEP

Newborn sleep can feel unpredictable . Babies wake frequently to feed, may sleep in short stretches and don't yet understand the difference between day and night.

Frequent waking doesn't mean you're doing anything wrong — your newborn is being a newborn.

WHAT WE MIGHT EXPECT

 Long stretches of sleep

 A predictable bedtime

 Quiet, still sleep

 Awake more during the day

WHAT NEWBORN SLEEP CAN LOOK LIKE

 Waking frequently

 Feeding around the clock

 Grunting, wriggling, and active sleep

 Sleeping at different times day and night

NURSE'S NOTE

Always place your baby on their back to sleep, in their own clear, flat, separate sleep space. Keep pillows, duvets, cot bumpers, toys and loose bedding out of the sleep space.

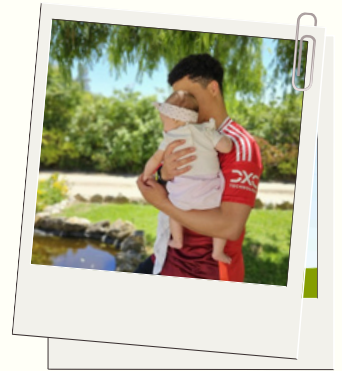
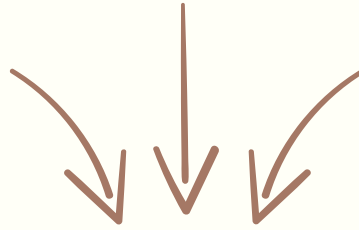
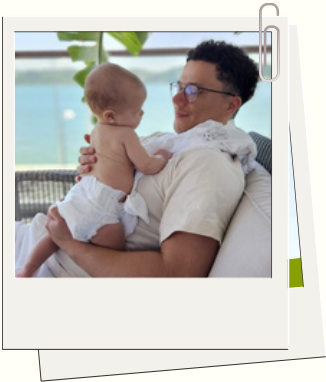
The safest place for your baby to sleep for the first 6 months is in their own cot or Moses basket, in the same room as you.

For current safer-sleep guidance, visit the NHS or The Lullaby Trust.

6. NEWBORNS DON'T NEED TO BE ENTERTAINED

In the early weeks, everything is new to your baby. Your face, your voice, being held and simply looking around are all forms of stimulation.

YOUR NEWBORN LOVES...



Your face

Newborns love looking at faces.

Your voice

Talking and singing are wonderful stimulation.

Being close to you

Holding, cuddling and skin-to-skin offer comfort and connection.

The world around them

Natural light, gentle sounds and simply looking around are plenty.

FROM ONE MUM TO ANOTHER

You don't need to fill every waking moment with activities. Sometimes lying together, having a cuddle or simply talking to your baby is more than enough.

7. YOU CAN'T SPOIL A NEWBORN WITH CUDDLES

Your newborn is adjusting to a completely new world. Being held, cuddled and comforted helps them feel safe and secure. Responding to your baby's need for closeness isn't creating a bad habit.



FROM ONE MUM TO ANOTHER

If your baby wants to be held and you're able to hold them, enjoy those cuddles. You don't need to worry that responding to their need for closeness will “spoil” them.

8. YOUR NEWBORN DOESN'T NEED A BATH EVERY DAY

Newborns don't need a bath every day. In the early weeks, a gentle wash of their face, neck, hands and nappy area is often all they need between baths.



GENTLE CARE

The first few baths can feel daunting. Take your time, keep your baby close and well supported, and don't worry about getting everything perfect. Your confidence will grow with each bath.

COMFORT

Keep the room warm and have everything within reach before you begin.

CONNECTION

Your touch, voice and closeness can help your baby feel safe and reassured.

- * Bath time can be a quiet moment of closeness, comfort and connection.
Your gentle touch and familiar voice can help your baby feel safe and relaxed.

NURSE'S NOTE

Never leave your baby alone in the bath, even for a moment. Have everything you need within reach before you start, and always check the water temperature before putting your baby in.

9. YOUR NEWBORN'S SKIN MAY LOOK DIFFERENT THAN YOU EXPECT

Newborn skin isn't always perfectly smooth. In the first few weeks, you may notice peeling, dryness, tiny spots or changes in appearance as your baby's skin adjusts to life outside the womb.

PEELING & DRYNESS

Dry or peeling skin is very common in the first few weeks, especially around the hands, feet and ankles. It usually settles naturally as your baby's skin adjusts.

TINY SPOTS

Small white spots called milia are common, particularly around the nose and face. They're harmless and usually disappear on their own.

LESS IS OFTEN MORE

Your baby's delicate skin doesn't need lots of products. Simple, gentle care is usually best.

NEWBORN RASHES

Newborns can develop various spots and rashes in the early weeks. Many are harmless and temporary, but ask for advice if you're worried or your baby seems unwell.



NURSE'S NOTE

Trust your instincts. If you're worried about a change in your baby's skin, or your baby seems unwell, seek medical advice. A temperature of 38°C or above in a baby under 3 months needs urgent medical assessment.

10. YOU KNOW YOUR BABY BETTER THAN YOU THINK

Your confidence won't appear overnight. As you spend time together, you'll begin to recognise your baby's little sounds, movements, cues and ways of communicating. Getting to know each other takes time.



1 TRUST YOURSELF

Learn what feels normal for your baby.

2 WATCH AND LEARN

Notice your baby's cues and ways of communicating.

3 ASK FOR HELP

If something doesn't feel right, reach out.

FROM ONE MUM TO ANOTHER

You won't always feel like you know what you're doing, and that's okay. With every cuddle, every feed, every difficult night and every little moment together, you're learning your baby, and your baby is learning you. Give yourself time.