

Babies are hard, but small engine repair is harder. Your baby needs your time and attention; time and attention you already spend on things that are hard, but rewarding to you. Being a father is exactly the same; you are doing something hard but rewarding; you are doing something you want to do. Doing hard things isn't so hard when it's something we love. **Being a protector means making sure that your family has what they need.**

Bottle Feeding

1. Prepare the bottle! There are a few different types of baby bottles. You will want to start out with the newborn type. Make sure the bottle is clean!!! If you're using formula, follow the directions on the label to make it correctly. If mom is pumping breastmilk, NEVER microwave the milk, the microwave can actually destroy some of the healthy parts of breastmilk. Instead microwave a bowl of water and then set the bottle in the hot water. Test the temperature of the milk BEFORE giving it to the baby. Luke warm is best. Hot is not.
2. Get comfy and position the bottle at an angle rather than straight up and down so the milk only comes out when your baby sucks. And only milk, try not to let them suck air down. Let your baby take breaks from drinking when he or she seems to want them.
3. Watch your baby for cues that he or she is full, and then stop, even if the bottle is not empty. Cues may be that she closes her mouth or turns her head away when you offer the bottle, or more obviously, she fell asleep.
4. BURPING! First, get a cloth ready to go for the inevitable spit up. Lay him over your shoulder. Pat him firmly but gently in the middle of the back until burp occurs. Light tickling or stroking their back can also work. Burping is recommended mid-feed for newborns and little babies, as well as at the end of feeding. A mid-feed burp can help prevent gas bubbles and colic.

Breastfeeding

1. Don't make mom carry the baby, she can go get comfortable, you bring the baby to her.
2. Fix mom a big jug of water.
3. Rub mom's shoulders.
4. Burping!

Sleeping

American Academy of Pediatrics recommends keeping the crib free of blankets, pillows, toys and any items until the baby is 12 months old. Babies love to be swaddled. A swaddling blanket may be perfect for your baby.

How to swaddle your baby:

1. Fold the corner of a blanket down about six inches.
2. Place your baby with their head above the folded corner.
3. Gently wrap one side over the baby and tuck it under the opposite arm, with their arms at their sides.
4. Wrap the other side over the baby and tuck the bottom around.

Baby is Uncomfortable

Babies can be uncomfortable and sometimes it is hard to know why. Make sure they aren't too hot or too cold. Check your baby's fingers, toes and even privates for hair, string or lint that can make them uncomfortable. Hair can wrap around their little fingers or toes and really annoy them. Also, a baby may just be bored. **Babies need stimulation and interaction, so be sure to spend time playing with them and talking to them.** Chilling skin-to-skin with your baby helps to calm them by regulating their mood and body temperature. **They also may be overstimulated. Take them to a quieter peaceful place to calm down. Sing to her or try swaddling. Good dads are involved dads.**

Resources:

1. Professionals, Healthcare. "Safe Sleep." Aap.org, American Academy of Pediatrics, 2023, www.aap.org/en/patient-care/safe-sleep/. Accessed 12/2022
2. Seitz, JoLyn. "The Importance of Skin-to-Skin with Baby after Delivery." News.sanfordhealth.org, Sanford Health News, 12 July 2022, news.sanfordhealth.org/childrens/the-importance-of-skin-to-skin-after-delivery-you-should-know/. Accessed 12/2022
3. "Behavioral Task in a Human Mother-Infant Dyad." YouTube, YouTube, 6 Mar. 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjzOdUpmthk. Accessed 12/2022
4. Gutoskey, Ellen. "Why Do Babies Start Crying as Soon as You Sit down?" MentalFloss.com, Mental Floss, 11 Nov. 2020, www.mentalfloss.com/article/630396/why-babies-cry-when-you-sit-down. Accessed 12/2022