

## At home with your baby

Your baby was admitted to the paediatric ward at Amstelland Hospital and will go home soon. This leaflet provides you with tips and advice about caring and feeding during the initial period.

### **The baby room**

The temperature in the baby room does not have to be especially high. For the first months 18 to 20°C is a good room temperature. Ensure that there is good ventilation. Avoid lying the baby in a draft and keep the room free of insects. Air the room regularly by occasionally opening the window a little bit. Leaving the curtains open during the day ensures your baby gets used to a day-and-night rhythm. You do not have to be extra quiet. This way your baby gets used to all the sounds in the house.

### **Baby's temperature**

During the first days at home, it is advisable to check your baby's temperature a few times a day. Take the temperature when you take your baby out of the cot. A normal body temperature is between 36.8 and 37.3°C. If the temperature is lower than 36.8, we advise putting a hot water bottle in the cot. Only use approved hot water bottles. Fill the hot water bottle following the instructions and check it for any leaks. Place the bottle in a bottle bag. Always place the bottle in the cot with the top facing down. Never put the bottle directly against the baby but wrap it in a blanket. Place the bottle in the bed before the baby goes to sleep, so the bed is already nice and warm.

### **Going outside**

After discharge from the hospital you may take the baby outside straight away, unless you have been advised differently. It is not recommended to go outside in strong winds, heavy rain or severe cold. Ensure that the pram is warmed by means of a hot water bottle. If necessary, the bottle can remain in the pram next to the baby.

### **At home with your baby**

Safety in the car do not place the baby seat on a seat where an airbag is fitted; place the baby seat opposite to the travelling direction; a travel cot is only safe if you use special safety belts.

### **Position in bed**

From the start, lay your baby on its back with the baby's head alternately to the left and right, unless you were given different advice from the hospital. Never put your baby to sleep lying on its tummy. For more tips please visit [www.veiligheid.nl](http://www.veiligheid.nl). You will receive a leaflet about safe sleeping when you and your baby are about to go home.

### **Bathing**

You can choose any bathing time, however, try to do it before a feed to avoid vomiting. Ensure that everything is ready and the room temperature is not too cold. The bath water must be about 37 to 38°C. You can check this with a bath thermometer but always check by dipping your elbow in as well. Do not wash the baby's face with soap.

In the winter, put clothes on the heating or roll them around a hot water bottle to make them nice and warm. You can take showers with your baby.

### **Caring for the umbilical stump**

The umbilical stump will fall off after 14 days. No extra care is needed. If the umbilical stump smells or looks red, ask the baby health clinic for advice.

### **Eye care**

Almost all babies occasionally have dirty eyes. You can clean these with a dressing and lukewarm, running tap water. Wipe the eye clean towards the nose. Only use a dressing once.

### **Nail care**

You can cut the baby's nails after approximately 6 weeks. Before that time you can file the nails with a cardboard file.

### **Hygiene**

If you or your partner has a cold, wash your hands extra carefully before attending to the baby. Visitors who have a cold are best kept away from the baby. It is best to avoid visits of young children who have been in contact with child diseases as well.

### **Nutrition**

#### *Breastfeeding*

You will receive written advice and/or breastfeeding information for the maternity nurse and/or baby health clinic. We will discuss feeds and feeding times with you before you and your baby go home. These are the guidelines you can follow at home. You may get advice from the breastfeeding specialist about breastfeeding and expressing milk at home. In the beginning, it may be necessary to alternate between breastfeeding and giving breast milk in a bottle. Depending on your baby's behaviour you can make your own judgment about gradually breastfeeding

more often. It is recommended not to use more than half an hour for a feed (including changing the nappy), otherwise it becomes too tiring.

If your baby has plenty of wet nappies - at least 6 a day - and is content, you can assume that he or she is drinking enough. Stools can be soft or runny and can vary in colour. Your baby may have stools once a week or several times a day.

You can feed at times when your baby is asking for it. If he or she does not drink from the breast sufficiently, you could try to see if he or she will drink from the bottle. Expressing milk is done in the same way as in the hospital. If you collect the milk hygienically and freeze it immediately, it can be kept in the freezer for up to 6 months. Fresh and defrosted breast milk can be stored in the fridge for 48 hours. Even if you breastfeed, it is advisable to have a supply of formula milk at home.

#### *Heating up breast milk*

Breast milk is best heated up in a bottle warmer or by putting the bottle in a pan of lukewarm water for a few minutes (eau bain-marie). The milk does not have to be warmer than 37°C.

#### *Formula milk*

You can choose the same formula milk as your baby was given in hospital or you may choose a different one. The preparation is clearly stated on the packaging. Some babies need special formula milk. We will let you know whether this applies to your baby. A baby on formula milk must have a poo nappy at least once a day.

### **Cleaning bottles**

For the first 6 weeks bottles and teats must be boiled once a day. Bottles for 10 minutes and teats for 3 minutes. Before and after use rinse them with water and preferably store the bottles in the fridge.

The teats must be replaced after 6 weeks. You could also use a microwave steriliser.

### **Dummy**

Your baby may have a need to suck. In the hospital your baby has been introduced to a dummy, which you can continue to use at home. For a breastfed baby it is sometimes better to satisfy his or her sucking need on the breast.

A dummy must also be boiled once a day and replaced after 6 weeks or sooner if it starts showing little cracks.

### **Vitamins**

Vitamin K is important for coagulation of the blood. Start giving it when your baby is 1 week old and continue for 3 months. If more than half of your baby's food consists of formula milk, you do not have to give vitamin K.

Vitamin D is necessary for good bone development. Start giving it when your baby is 1 week old. All babies are given vitamin D until the age of 4. Always read the information leaflet of the vitamins for the correct dosage.

### **Tips for tummy cramps**

All babies have tummy cramps and this may last for about 3 months.

Characteristics of tummy cramps are that your baby suddenly cries, is difficult to soothe, pulls up his or her legs and seems to push. What can you do?

Rub the tummy, possibly with a warm cloth. Lie your baby on its back on the changing mat, pull its knees up and let them rest on the tummy. Keep your baby in this position for a few minutes. Make your baby burp more often. Feed in quiet surroundings.

### **Rooming-in**

Especially for parents of babies who stayed at the paediatric ward for a longer time, there is an opportunity for rooming-in. In order to prepare for the

discharge from hospital, you can look after your baby yourself for 24 hours at the paediatric ward. If necessary, you can ask for support from the nurse. Rooming-in usually helps to have a more gradual transition from ward to home. Building up a relationship and learning to enjoy!

The first period at home is not always easy and relaxed. Your baby may be restless and cry a lot. This could be caused by the fact that your baby has to get used to the circumstances at home. Avoid having many visitors at home during the first days, they can come at another time. It is good to be together with the family the first few days to find a rhythm. Avoid having your baby passed on from one to the other. If the baby is sleeping and is in the cot let it sleep, even if you have visitors. Disturbing a baby's sleep may cause stress.

Everything surrounding the birth of your baby was different from what you thought. You will therefore not automatically be able to enjoy your baby in a relaxed and natural way right from the beginning. You must learn to do this. Take time for your baby. Focus on the times that are nice and relaxed.

### **Questions**

If you have doubts about something or any questions when you are at home, you can always phone the paediatric ward on telephone number 020 - 755 6680 before your first polyclinic appointment.

We wish you much happiness together!

Nurses at the paediatric ward at Amstelland Hospital.

### **Opmerkingen over deze folder**

Ontbreekt er informatie in deze folder of is iets onduidelijk beschreven, dan horen wij dat graag. U kunt uw opmerkingen doorgeven via voorlichting@zha.nl