

# The first hours at home with your baby

Tips for parents after the hospital birth in the evening or night

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**To help you get through the first night at home, we have prepared a brief summary of important information on caring for yourself and your baby. We would also like to draw your attention to the Babybalance instructional videos.**

Inform your maternity care provider as soon as possible when you get home. Calling is possible until 10 p.m. or the next morning from 7 a.m. If you have any concerns or urgent questions, contact your midwife. Make sure the house is not too cold (+/- 20 °C) and use a wrap to keep your baby warm outside the bed. Record all pee and poop diapers, temperature and feedings in the care plan.

## Mother care

- Make sure you urinate regularly, preferably before every feeding. Change your bandages and wash your hands. If you are unable to urinate within six hours of delivery, call your midwife.
- Do not go to the bathroom alone during the first 24 hours and never lock the door. You may still get lightheaded during the first few days when you go to the bathroom. It is important to have someone around to help then.
- You may lose clots; they can be the size of a small orange. If you have more than two large clots, contact your midwife. Also contact if the blood loss is more than two full bandages in half an hour.

## Baby's temperature

- It is important that your baby has a good temperature. A baby who is too cold will use a lot of energy trying to keep themselves warm. As a result, their energy is less to be well-awake, eat properly and grow. In the womb, the temperature is 37° C, so even in the summer when we are hot, most infants will need hot water bottles or a hat to stay warm.
- Give your baby properly buttoned, fitted clothing.
- Use a thermometer to take temperatures. Clean it each time after you get your baby dressed again. This is done with a piece of cotton wool and the alcohol that are both included in the maternity package. Always store the clean thermometer in its case.
- If you breastfeed on demand, you don't need to take temperatures at every feeding. Twice a night is sufficient, unless your baby has a very low or high temperature. In that case, do take your temperature every two to three hours.
- When changing your baby, have them exposed for as short a time as possible and do not change your baby's clothes at every little stain. This will prevent heat loss to your baby.

## Breastfeeding

Feed your baby on demand every two to three hours, up to four hours between feedings. Offer both

breasts and start each feed with the breast you ended with. Points to consider when attaching:

1. Make sure you sit relaxed and well supported.
2. Place your baby belly to belly and make sure your baby lies so that the nipple is at upper lip/nose level.
3. Let your baby take a big bite. Your baby should not only have the nipple but also part of the areola in their mouth.
4. When your baby is properly at the breast, you can see that the nose is clear of the breast. The lips are curled outward and your baby has rounded cheeks. You won't hear any sound except swallowing and breathing.

## Bottle feeding

- Make sure you have a clean bottle. Wash your hands.
- Follow the instructions for use printed on the package.
- Check the temperature of the milk on your wrist. Better a little too cold than too hot.
- The first night/day offer your baby 30 cc of formula, or offer at your baby's request, or keep the amount of milk you were told by the hospital.
- Your baby will stop drinking when your baby is ready. Discard the remaining milk.
- Clean the bottle or teat thoroughly immediately after each use. Take the bottle completely apart and rinse all parts with cold water. Wash everything with warm water and detergent. Use a bottle brush to do this. Rinse with warm water. Place all parts upside down on a clean tea towel or in a bottle rack. In the morning, discuss the feeding policy with your midwife and/or maternity nurse.

## Changing baby

Before each feeding, change your baby and take their temperature. There may be orange/red spots in the diaper. These are uric acid crystals, called urates. In girls, there may also be some vaginal bleeding and/or white or transparent discharge. This is normal, no need to worry. If in doubt, keep the diaper until the maternity nurse arrives.

## Crib

- The crib is made low, so that your baby cannot get under the blanket. Use a sheet and blanket (not a quilt). Do not use Aerosleep.
- Place a folded, into a triangle, hydrophilic diaper under the head and tuck it in tightly. If your baby spits up, only the hydrophilic cloth needs to be changed.
- Lay the baby on its back in the crib and place the face alternately to the left and right. Change the position of the head after each feeding. We do this to prevent a preferred position and to make sure your baby does not get a flattened head.
- The crib should preferably be in the parents' room.

## Hot water bottles

- Put the hot water bottle in the sink.
- Fill the bottle completely with hot water.
- Boiling water bottles should only be used on the advice of a doctor, midwife or maternity nurse. Otherwise, use only hot water bottles.
- Air in the hot water bottle is more likely to cause leaks, so make sure it really is completely filled.
- Turn the cap counterclockwise a bit until it drops into the thread. Then turn it clockwise to close it.

Use a dry tea towel to tighten the cap securely, and never touch the hot water bottle with bare hands so you don't burn your fingers.

- Dry the hot water bottle and lay it on its side on the counter to check that it does not leak. Put the hot water bottle upright and put the hot water bottle bag over it from the top. Close the hot water bottle bag.

## Placing the hot water bottle in bed

- Place hot water bottle in bed on the blanket, a hand width away from your baby.
- If using two hot water bottles, lay the hot water bottles in an L-shape.
- Advice: wrap the hot water bottle (with hot water bottle bag) in a hydrophilic diaper. Secure it with a double knot.
- The cap is always facing the foot end.
- Always place the hot water bottles on top of the blanket and cover with a second blanket or wrap. This way the heat doesn't go out into the air, but goes toward your baby.
- A normal temperature for your baby is between 36.5° C and 37.5° C.

In the chart below you can see if hot water bottles should be in bed with the baby and how many

<b>Below 36 °C</b>	Re-measure to check, skin-to-skin contact and always call midwife.
<b>36 to 36,5 °C</b>	Put on hat and preferably skin-to-skin contact. Or put on a hat and extra clothes in bed, two hot water bottles in a big bed and in a crib add only one water bottle. Note: After one hour temperature your baby again. Now the temperature should have risen half a degree. If not, call the midwife.
<b>36,5 to 37 °C</b>	One hot water bottle in a preheated bed, put on a hat and button up clothes. At next feeding, take temperature again.
<b>37 to 37,5 °C</b>	Preheat bed with hot water bottle. A warm hot water bottle may be placed in bed at night.
<b>37,5 to 38 °C</b>	Take off hat, blanket less, fewer clothes, no hot water bottles. After one hour, take your baby's temperature again. If the temperature remains above 37.5 °C, call the midwife.
<b>Above 38 °C</b>	Always call the midwife.

## Observing your baby

- Babys can feel nauseous for the first few days. Your baby may gag or spit up. Do not be alarmed by this, but calmly lay your baby on its side and wipe away the spit with a cloth.
- Newborn babies do not yet have good blood flow. Therefore they often have cold hands and feet. They may also look a little blue. It is not necessary to tuck little hands under the blanket. The most relaxed position for a baby is with the hands next to/above the head.
- Call your midwife if your baby shows the following symptoms:
  - drowsiness, weakness, a groaning/rapid/irregular breathing
  - a gray or pale coloration of the face or body

## \* Babybalance

You have access to a large number of instructional videos, which can also help you with the first hours or night and the first days with your baby. The videos follow up seamlessly with what you (will) learn from your midwife and maternity nurse. You have received login information from Babybalance to activate your account unless you have objected. If you have not received your login details, are unable to log in, or have other questions about Babybalance, please visit the website at <https://www.welkomkraamzorg.nl/nieuws/babybalance-veelgestelde-vragen/>.