

## **New Year, New Baby**

*Tips on caring for a newborn*  
*First 5 Riverside*

Bringing home a newborn is an exciting time for families. But along with joy, parents also experience a lot of hard work and little sleep. Knowing what to expect and how to care for a newborn can help mom and dad deal with changes and gain confidence as they bond with their baby.

The following is basic advice about some of the most common questions and concerns that come up during the first months of life.

### **Calming a Newborn**

Crying is a useful way for babies to tell you when they are hungry or uncomfortable. If your baby's diaper is dry, she's warm and well fed, but she's still crying, try these soothing tips:

- Gently stroke her head or pat her back, and try burping her to relieve any gas bubbles.
- Rock your baby, go for a car ride or walk her in a stroller around the neighborhood.
- Turn on a fan or say "shush" into your baby's ear repeatedly. Babies hear many noises in the womb so soothing "white noise" may be calming.

### **Promote Healthy Habits from the Start**

Babies develop very quickly during the first year, and they need sleep and proper nutrition to grow up healthy.

- Give breastfeeding a chance! Breast milk provides the best source of nutrition for babies to help strengthen their immune system, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. Breastfeeding also provides special bonding time for mother and child.
- Newborns need a lot of sleep – learn your baby's signs that he's tired and try to put him down to sleep right away. Notice when he rubs his eyes, pulls his ear or gets faint dark circles under his eyes.
- Keep your child healthy by visiting the doctor for check-ups and when you have concerns your baby may be sick or running a fever. Also, ask your doctor about immunizations and when to schedule them. The California Department of Public Health offers a helpful guide at [www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/immunize](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/immunize).

### **Take Care of Yourself**

The early weeks of parenting are very rewarding, but also exhausting. In the midst of all the excitement of bringing home a new baby, it's important that parents take care of themselves, too!

- Get as much rest as possible even though it can be difficult. Also remember that exercising and eating healthy are very important to keep your energy up.
- Do what you can and leave the rest for later or for others to do. Reach out to family, friends, parent groups or a counselor for help. Check with your local First 5, YMCAs, community centers and places of worship to learn about support in your area.

For additional resources, First 5 California offers the *Kit for New Parents*, a parents' guide packed with information and resources to guide new parents through the first five years of a child's life. Free kits in English, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean and Vietnamese are available by calling 1-800-KIDS-025.

For more parenting information and support, contact First 5 Riverside at (800) 266-3880 or [www.rccfc.org](http://www.rccfc.org) and [www.first5california.com/parents](http://www.first5california.com/parents).

**About First 5 Riverside**

Research shows that a child's brain develops most dramatically in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child's growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life. Based on this research, California voters passed Proposition 10 in 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to support programs for expectant parents and children ages 0 to 5. First 5 Riverside distributes Prop. 10 revenues to programs and services that meet local needs.

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