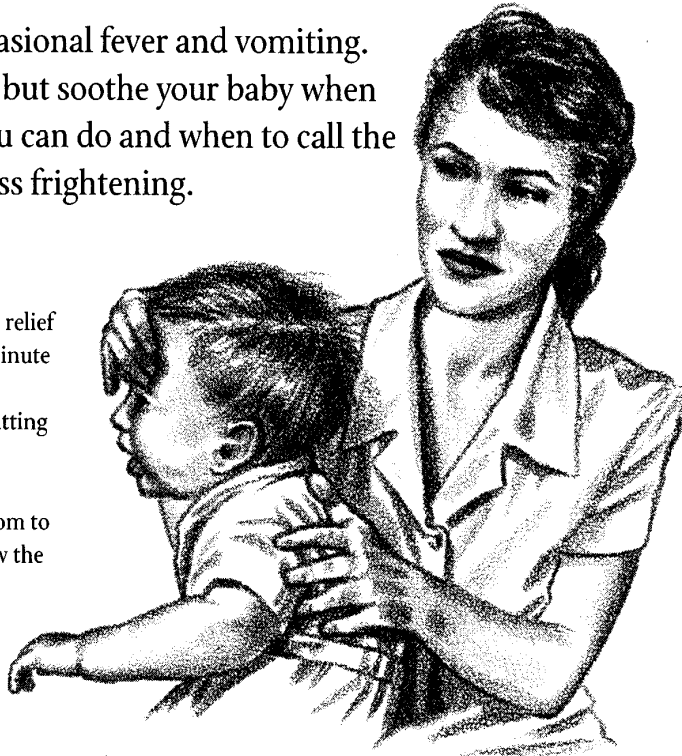




When Your Baby Is Sick

Most babies get colds and the occasional fever and vomiting. There's usually little you can do but soothe your baby when he doesn't feel well. Knowing what you can do and when to call the doctor makes caring for a sick baby less frightening.



Colds

- If your baby has a stuffy nose, you can give him some relief by putting a few saline drops in his nose, waiting a minute and suctioning the mucus out.
- To make sleeping easier, raise your baby's head by putting a pillow under the mattress. Lying down can make congestion worse.
- A cool-mist humidifier can be used in your baby's room to help the secretions drain better. Make sure you follow the manufacturer's directions carefully, and clean the humidifier each day to prevent bacteria from growing.

Gas

When your baby's crying and pulling his legs to his abdomen, he probably has gas. It can be very uncomfortable for your baby until the gas is passed.

- To help prevent gas bubbles in the intestines, burp your baby after every feeding and every 2 or 3 ounces if you're bottle-feeding and between each breast if you're breast-feeding.
- To give your baby some relief from gas pains, you can softly rub his tummy or slowly bring his knees to his chest, lower them and repeat.
- Sometimes motion will help soothe your baby. Walk with your baby in a front pack, take a drive in the car or put him in his car seat on top of a running washing machine. (Be sure not to leave your baby unattended.)

Vomiting

It's normal for babies to spit up after eating and when they burp. Vomiting is more forceful than spitting up. If your baby begins to vomit, pay attention to the amount of liquid he takes in and whether he's urinating normally. The biggest danger of excessive vomiting is dehydration. If your baby vomits for longer than 24 hours, call your doctor.

Fever

A fever means the body is fighting an illness or infection. Fever in newborns is more serious than in older babies. If your baby is feverish and crying a lot, it may be a sign of an ear infection. Call your doctor if a fever lasts more than 24 hours or is over 100° F in babies 6 months or younger. Check with your doctor before giving nonaspirin pain reliever to lower fever.

WHEN TO CALL YOUR DOCTOR

- when you can't get your baby's nose clear
- if your baby suffers from gas a lot (Ask your doctor about switching formulas.)
- if your newborn has a temperature of 100° F or more
- if your baby is 3 to 6 months old and has a temperature of 101° F or higher
- if your baby is older than 6 months and has a fever of 103° F or higher
- if your baby's mouth is dry and there's a significant decrease in the number of wet diapers (These are the first signs of dehydration.)