

are believed to influence the attachment process and successful breastfeeding. Unnecessary routine washing of the breast may interfere with establishment of early breastfeeding.

### **Taste**

The newborn has the ability to distinguish among tastes and various types of solutions elicit differing facial reflexes. A tasteless solution elicits no facial expression; a sweet solution elicits an eager suck and a look of satisfaction; a sour solution causes puckering of the lips; and a bitter liquid produces an angry, upset expression.

### **Touch**

At birth, infants are able to perceive tactile sensation in any part of the body, although the face (especially the mouth), hands, and soles of the feet seem to be most sensitive. Evidence shows that touch and motion are essential to normal growth and development. Gentle patting of the back or rubbing of the abdomen usually elicits a calming response from infants. In turn, painful stimuli, such as a pinprick, elicit an upset response.

## **Nursing Care of the Newborn and Family**

### **Assessment**

Newborns require thorough, skilled observation to ensure a satisfactory adjustment to extrauterine life. Physical assessment after delivery can be divided into four phases:

1. The initial assessment, which includes the Apgar scoring system
2. Transitional assessment during the periods of reactivity
3. Assessment of gestational age
4. Systematic physical examination

In addition, the nurse must be aware of behaviors that signal successful reciprocal attachment between the infant and parents. Awareness of the expected normal findings during each assessment process helps the nurse recognize any deviation that may prevent