



## How Your Newborn Behaves

Lying in your arms or in the crib beside you, your newborn makes a tight little bundle. Just as they did in the womb, they'll keep their arms and legs bent up close to their body and his fingers tightly clenched, although you should be able to gently straighten them. Their feet will naturally curve inward. It may take several weeks for their body to unfold from this preferred fetal position.



### Making & hearing sounds

You'll have to wait even longer for him to make the cooing or babbling sounds we think of as "baby talk."

However, from the beginning they'll be very noisy. Besides crying when something is wrong, your newborn will have a wide variety of grunts, squeaks, sighs, sneezes, and hiccups. (You may even remember the hiccups from pregnancy!) Many of these sounds, just like their sudden movements, are reactions to disturbances around them; a shrill sound or a strong odor may be all it takes to make them jump or cry.

These reactions, as well as more subtle ones, are signs of how your baby's senses are functioning at birth. After all those months in the womb, they'll quickly recognize their mother's voice (and possibly their partner's, as well). If you play soothing music, they may become quiet as they listen (</English/ages-stages/baby/Pages/Hearing-and-Making-Sounds.aspx>) or move gently in time with it.

### Smell, taste & vision

By using smell (</English/ages-stages/baby/Pages/Newborn-Smell-and-Touch.aspx>) and taste, your newborn is able to distinguish breast milk (</English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/default.aspx>) from any other liquid. Breast milk is naturally sweet and will appeal to a baby's sweet tooth.

Your baby's vision (</English/ages-stages/baby/Pages/Babys-Vision-Development.aspx>) will be best within an 8- to 12-inch (20.3 to 30.5 cm) range, which means they can see your face perfectly as you hold and feed them. When you are farther away, their eyes may wander, giving a cross-eyed appearance. Don't worry about this during the first couple of months. Between two and three months of age, your newborn's eye muscles will mature, their vision will improve, and both eyes will stay focused on the same thing more of the time. If this does not, bring it to the attention of your baby's pediatrician.

While able to tell light from dark at birth, your newborn will not yet see the full range of colors. Young infants who are shown a pattern of black and white or sharply contrasting colors may study them with interest. However, they are not likely to respond at all when shown a picture with lots of closely related colors.

### Sense of touch

Perhaps the newborn's most important sense is touch. After months of being in the womb, your baby is now exposed to all sorts of new sensations - some harsh, some wonderfully comforting. While they may cringe at a sudden gust of cold air, they'll love the feel of a soft blanket and the warmth of your arms around them.

Holding your baby gives them as much pleasure as it does you. It will give them a sense of security and comfort, and tell them they are loved. Research shows that close emotional bonding actually will promote his growth and development.

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