

Umbilical Care

Overview

The end of the umbilical cord (called the umbilical stump) usually falls off at about 2 weeks old, or slightly later. It becomes dark in color, dry and leathery/hard, and can scratch your newborn's skin.

At Home Care

Mild crusty blood, mild redness, wetness at the base, or partial detachment of stump until fully falling off are all normal. Do not pull the stump off. It is OK to protect your infant's skin with soft, breathable gauze around the umbilical stump, but do not seal off the area at the base as it needs to dry out for healing.

Once the umbilical stump falls off, the belly button goes through the same process of drying out and healing. Do not be afraid to use a dry Q-tip or wet wash cloth with gentle infant soap to daily clean the belly button. Try to keep it dry as this will speed up healing time.

Do not use alcohol wipes, harsh cleaning soaps, or lotions/emollients to the belly button. These can dry out normal skin and cause cracks or irritation. Lotions/creams can keep the area wet and that is disadvantageous for normal healing.

Monitoring Symptoms

Concerning symptoms include: red and swollen tissues around the stump, if any area seems painful to touch, yellow/pus drainage, or persistent bleeding from area.

Please call if your baby has a fever of 100.4 Fahrenheit or higher.



Questions?

This sheet provides general advice and is not specific for your individual child. Always call if something seems off or if you have specific questions or concerns!

