

## 3.1. Postnatal checks

## The postnatal checks that are carried out on the baby immediately after birth and the reasons why

## Apgar score

- The Apgar score is used to evaluate the physical condition of a newborn, by assessing 5 vital signs: 1. Heartbeat 2. Breathing 3. Muscle tone 4. Reflex 5. Response 6. Colour.
- The score is used to assess how well the baby is doing outside the mother's womb.
- This quick assessment is carried out 1 min after birth and again after 5 min.
- If a problem is identified, reassessment may continue every 5 min.
- Maximum scores: 10
- 9/10: Most healthy babies
- <6/10 after 5 min: A paediatrician will be informed
- 5-7/10: May show signs of mild asphyxia and may need treatment
- 3-4/10: Indicates moderate asphyxia and will certainly need treatment
- 0-2/10: Severe asphyxia and will need emergency resuscitation

## Skin

<b>Salmon patches (stork marks)</b>	Flat red or pink patches that appear on the eyelids, neck or forehead at birth. Most fade completely in a few months. Some can remain for 4 years or longer.
<b>Blue-grey spots</b>	Bluish patches for darker pigmented, appearing most commonly over the bottom and on black skin. They usually disappear by age 4.
<b>Infantile haemangiomas (strawberry marks)</b>	Raised marks on the skin that are usually red and can appear anywhere on the body. They grow in the first 6 months but then shrink and disappear, usually by 7 years of age.
<b>Vernix</b>	This is the white, waxy substance that covers a baby's skin while it is in the womb. Newborns will have this on their skin at birth. It provides a protective layer that helps to prevent infection.
<b>Lanugo</b>	During pregnancy, at 22 weeks, a baby begins to be covered in lanugo – soft, fine hair which is thought to help regulate their temperature. It is usually shed at months 7-8 of pregnancy.

## Weight

- Full term baby weight: 2.7-4.1 kg (6-9 lb)
- A steady weight gain is an important sign that a baby is healthy and feeding well.

## Length

Average length of a newborn: 50-53 cm

## Head circumference

The measurement of the baby's head is used to track development over the coming weeks/months

## Apgar Scoring System

Indicator		0 Points	1 Point	2 Points
<b>A</b>	<b>Activity</b> (muscle tone)	Absent	Flexed arms and legs	Active
<b>P</b>	<b>Pulse</b>	Absent	Below 100 bpm	Over 100 bpm
<b>G</b>	<b>Grimace</b> (reflex irritability)	Floppy	Minimal response to stimulation	Prompt response to stimulation
<b>A</b>	<b>Appearance</b> (skin color)	Blue; pale	Pink body, Blue extremities	Pink
<b>R</b>	<b>Respiration</b>	Absent	Slow and irregular	Vigorous cry

## The checks that are carried out on the baby within one to five days of birth and the reasons why

## Physical examination (within 5 days of birth)

<b>Feet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Toes are counted and checked for webbing.</li> <li>– Check for talipes (clubfoot).</li> </ul>
<b>Fingers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Fingers are counted and checked for webbing.</li> <li>– Palms are checked if 2 creases run across them (1 crease is sometimes associated with Down's Syndrome).</li> </ul>
<b>Hips</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Check for 'developmental dysplasia of the hip' – hip joints have not formed correctly.</li> </ul>
<b>Eyes</b>	Assess the appearance and movement of eyes for cataracts and other conditions.
<b>Heart</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Feel the baby's pulses and listen to their heart.</li> <li>– Sometimes heart murmurs are picked up.</li> </ul>
<b>Testicles in boys</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Check that they are in the right place.</li> <li>– During pregnancy, they form inside the baby's body and drop into the scrotum a few months after birth. If they do not descend fully or at all, this needs to be treated.</li> </ul>
<b>Fontanelle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– A baby's head has soft spots (fontanelles) between the bones in the skull as the skull bones have not fused together yet.</li> <li>– The soft spots are covered by a tough protective membrane. These will be checked, but it will be a year or more before the bones join together.</li> </ul>

## Heel prick test (blood spot test)

A screening test, with a small blood sample, that helps to identify several rare but serious diseases such as, cystic fibrosis and sickle cell disease.

## 3.2. Postnatal care of the mother and baby

**The role of the health visitor in supporting the new family**

**Health Visitor:** A qualified nurse or midwife who has had extra training.

**Role:** To give all families support, from pregnancy up until children are aged five.

**Purpose:** Make sure that the child is healthy and developing normally, and to support both parents to care well for their child.

**Information, advice and support the health visitor will provide**

- Advice on all aspects of baby care and childcare, including feeding, sleeping and development.
- Run clinics offering important baby health and development reviews and vaccinations.
- Give advice regarding mental health and suggest where to find help.
- Put parents in touch with groups to meet other parents.
- Are available for parents to talk about any issues to do with their child.

**Safe sleeping – SIDS and how to reduce the risk**

- Sleeping position and bedding may be a factor in cases of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Babies should sleep on a mattress that is: firm, waterproof, flat and in good condition.

**Keeping Baby Safe while sleeping**

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the unexplained death of a seemingly healthy baby usually during sleep. Although the exact cause is unknown and all babies are vulnerable, certain sleep environments have been linked to an increased risk.

**9 ways to help protect your baby from SIDS**

- Ensure the crib is properly assembled and if there is any question, call the manufacturer.
- Always place baby on his/her back to sleep.
- Remove everything other than the mattress and fitted sheet from the crib when baby is sleeping. No pillows, blankets, toys, or bumpers.
- Use a blanket sleeper, never use loose blankets.
- Use a firm mattress with no more than two fingers width between the crib and mattress.
- Keep baby in Mom's room for the first few months, but in a separate sleeping area.
- Do not over-clothe baby while sleeping, baby should be warm but not sweating or hot to the touch.
- Keep a smoke-free zone around your baby.
- There shouldn't be more than a soda can's width between bars.
- Once breastfeeding is established offer a pacifier.

**Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)**

■ U.S. SIDS Mortality Rates - all races 1980-2010

Deaths / 100,000 live births

1980 1990 2000 2005 2010

Source: CDC and National Center for Health Statistics

**Educate everyone who cares for your baby on these safe sleep rules**

For more information about choosing nursery furniture, visit [simplybabyfurniture.com](http://simplybabyfurniture.com)

world's largest baby furniture store

**How partner, family and friends can provide physical and emotional support****Support from partner**

- It is important for partner's to also have time to bond with the baby.
- The partner will need to support the mother recover from the birth and to take care of herself following the birth.

**Support from family and friends**

- Practical help and advice are both valuable, from helping with shopping to sharing childcare tips.
- Some new parents will need a lot of support from family and friends who have more experience in the care of babies and children.

**The purpose of the mother's '6 week postnatal check' with the GP**

**Purpose:** To make sure that the mother is feeling well and recovering properly. The following usually happens:

- General questions and discussion regarding mental health and well-being.
- Asked if they still have any vaginal discharge and whether they've had a period since birth.
- BP is checked.
- Offered an examination to see if stitches have healed (from episiotomy or Caesarean section).
- If the mother was due for a cervical screening test while pregnant, this will be rescheduled for 12 weeks after birth.
- Mothers will be asked about contraception.
- If a mother is overweight or obese (BMI > 30), they may be weighed. Guidance on healthy eating, physical activity and weight loss will be given if appropriate.

## 3.3. The developmental needs of children from birth to five years

In order for children to successfully thrive, develop and grow, they need certain basic development needs to be met by their parents and carers.

<b>Warmth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide sufficient indoor and outdoor clothing for all weathers and temperatures.</li> <li>– Provide adequate bedding, central heating or other safe heaters.</li> </ul>	<b>Stimulation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Stimulation helps the child feel energised and interested in the world.</li> <li>– Helps them to learn about the world and to develop their social, intellectual, language and communication skills.</li> <li>– Stimulation is achieved through interaction and play – regularly talk to the baby/child throughout the day, provide interesting toys and sharing new stories, games, rhymes, singing, imaginary play, experiences etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Feeding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provide food and drink that contains the right nutrients for the baby/child at each stage of development.</li> <li>– Provide children with regular meals and snacks to ensure that they have the energy they need to grow, learn and play.</li> <li>– Make time to shop for, prepare and cook healthy food options over less healthy ones.</li> </ul>	<b>Routine – bath time, feeding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Routines help children feel safe and secure.</li> <li>– Routines help adults to ensure the child's needs are met effectively – feeding is spread out throughout the day to meet nutritious needs, child is bathed every day to ensure hygiene.</li> </ul>
<b>Love and emotional security</b>	<p>Feeling loved, wanted and nurtured makes a child feel emotionally secure. This can be demonstrated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Meeting a child's need with their well-being/best interests at heart</li> <li>– Being kind to them</li> <li>– Being interested in them and happy to devote time to them</li> <li>– Understand the child's emotions and respond with support and encouragement.</li> </ul> <p>A child who does not receive love and emotional security might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Fail to thrive</li> <li>– Be unhappy and experience social and emotional difficulties, both at home and the wider world</li> <li>– Negatively impact their development as a child and the effects may possibly continue into adulthood.</li> </ul>	<b>Rest/sleep</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Young children should be allowed to rest/sleep whenever they need to.</li> <li>– Good routines are helpful.</li> <li>– Build in plenty of time for quiet, restful activities after busier, physical ones.</li> <li>– Remember that activities that require concentration can also be tiring.</li> </ul>
<b>Shelter/home</b>	<p>Ensure the shelter/home is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Safe and secure</li> <li>– Healthy to live in (e.g. free from damp which can cause asthma).</li> </ul>	<b>Socialisation/play</b>	<p><b>UNCRC:</b> All children have a fundamental right to play. Children require socialisation with their peers and adults to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Learn how to interact with others and form relationships</li> <li>– Develop qualities such as empathy and fairness</li> </ul>
<b>Fresh air</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Helps children feel more energised, improve their mood and help them sleep better.</li> <li>– Being outside in the sun can help raise children's vitamin D levels – this helps the body to absorb calcium, which results in stronger bones.</li> </ul>	<b>Opportunities for listening and talking</b>	<p>Listening and talking with a child shows that you are interested in them. This is very important to their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Social and emotional development</li> <li>– Intellectual and language development</li> </ul>
<b>Exercise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Enough exercise builds fitness and robustness.</li> <li>– Lack of exercise has negative effects on: health, fitness, development.</li> </ul>	<b>Acceptable patterns of behaviour</b>	<p><b>Need for boundaries:</b> Children need to know what they can and cannot do. These boundaries need to be consistent. This helps the child to moderate their own behaviour in similar situations in the future.</p> <p><b>Promoting positive behaviour:</b> When positive behaviour in a child is noticed and praised by an adult, the child will feel proud of themselves and enjoy the approval. This will encourage them to repeat socially acceptable behaviour.</p>
<b>Cleanliness/hygiene</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Child must be bathed daily and kept clean and fresh.</li> <li>– Clothing and bedding should be regularly laundered.</li> <li>– Environment should be kept clean such as, kitchen, bedroom etc.</li> </ul>		