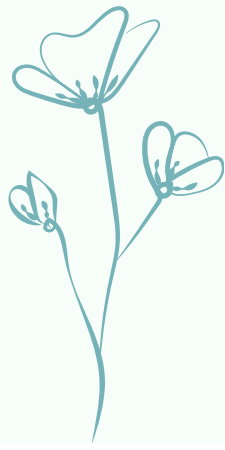




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INFANT CARE AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FIRST WEEK



Eating:

- Feeding a baby is a lot of work! Soon after birth your baby will begin searching for food and will nurse for 30-60 minutes before settling down for “the big nap” a 4-6 hour sleep when everyone rests and begins to recover from labor. After they wake from this sleep they will begin to settle in to a pattern of eating 8-10x in a 24 hour period (every 2-3 hours). If breast/chest feeding, the first few days supplies the baby with colostrum which helps expel the meconium. As your milk starts to come in you can expect a huge hormonal shift which may cause you to feel weepy and sad.
- Some hunger cues to look for include bringing the hands up to the cheeks, moving the head from side to side, smacking the lips or sticking out the tongue. If none of the cues are recognized the baby will resort to crying! Try to respond to the first cues, however if the baby is already crying giving them the tip of your little finger to suckle can help calm them before they move to the breast/chest or bottle.
- For those who are lactating, it takes up to 4 weeks to establish a milk supply so every feed counts. This can come with increased feelings of anxiety, pressure and feelings of inadequacy topped off with sleep deprivation! Finding ways for you and your partner to stay regulated will help you get through this. Some things that can help are true for both the birther and the baby- staying warm, being held, having a trusted loved one tell you that you are doing a great job.

Elimination:

- So how can you tell that your baby is eating enough? By checking the other end. If a baby is sufficiently nursing to gain weight (one way to tell), they will be producing a lot of dirty diapers! For the first week of life, the rule of thumb is a poop and a pee for each day they're alive (so day 3= 3 pees, 3 poops).
- There may be a slight orange-ish discharge in the first 3 days which is built up uric acid leaving the body. After 3 days this can be a sign of dehydration.
- Babies born with vaginas may discharge blood during the first week as the hormones from the birthing person leave their body.

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po box 323 Helena MT 59601

📞 406.548.7577

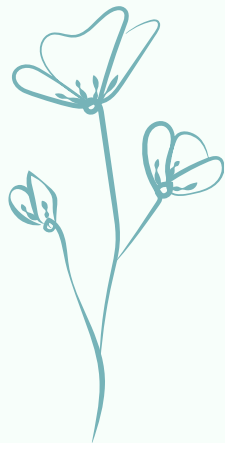
✉️ jenny@ripplemt.com

🌐 ripplemt.com



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INFANT CARE AND EXPECTATIONS



Sleeping:

- We may expect our babies to adapt to our sleep patterns, however, just like any adult they have their own rhythms. Babies are born without a circadian rhythm so they have no concept of day or night. Your baby will let you know their sleep preferences! You can try and notice patterns, just keep in mind that as soon as you find a pattern it very well might change! Swaddling, sleep sacks and babywearing, are a few ways you might support your baby as they learn and adapt to life outside of the womb.

Crying:

- Why do babies cry? We've been taught that babies fuss and cry because they are hungry, tired and soiled. This is all true, and it is also true that babies are sentient beings who are processing emotions. You can support your baby feeling its feelings through talking out loud to them and validating what they are going through. Some examples of things you might say are "Wow, it's really bright in here. It must be hard for you after being in a dark womb." or "It was a really long day for you meeting your grandparents, you must be wiped out". It can also help the parent regulate their system to use this technique.
- Another way to put this is needs vs release crying. Needs crying would be if the baby is hungry. Release crying is when the baby is processing stressors, feeling overwhelmed, or experiencing sensations related to their time in the womb/birth. Some signs of overstimulation/distress are jerky movements, clenching fists/kicking, crankiness or crying.

Things to keep in mind:

- You are the expert in your baby AND you are learning about your baby every day! These things are both true, and keeping these in mind may help you as you cross these uncharted waters of early infancy.
- "Normal" is a really wide range.
- You are doing the best you can and you are the best parent for your baby!