

NEWBORN APPEARANCE

Babies are born with a distinct appearance. Many of their features will change over the next few months as they develop. Following are some of the unique characteristics of newborns.

Head:

- May have strange shape because of molding (especially after a vaginal delivery) and swelling of the scalp.
- This will return to a normal round appearance soon.
- There are soft spots (fontanel) which pulsate with the baby's heartbeat.
- There are two - one is located on the top and one in the back.
- The larger one on the top usually closes by 10-14 months of age and the smaller one on the back will close within a couple of months.

Hair:

- Some babies have a lot of hair and some have hardly any at all.
- They may lose all of it during the first 6 months and then grow back with a different color.

Face:

- Often, the face is a bit swollen following delivery, wrinkled, and red.
- *Milia* (enlarged sebaceous glands, pimplelike) may be present for the first few weeks. DO NOT squeeze these as they will go away by themselves.
- The eyes are usually puffy and red after the medication is given (following delivery) and will clear after a couple of days.
- The color of the eyes is difficult to determine in a newborn. Many have grayish or brown-gray eyes, which will change to their permanent color at about 6 months of age.
- The ears are often flattened for awhile.
- The nose may be flattened and usually reshapes in about a week.

Skin:

- Newborns have smooth, puffy, pink and red skin.
- Many will develop a yellowed tone (jaundice) by the 3rd day.
- The skin will become dry and flaky.
- There are usually patches of *fine hair* (lanugo) on the earlobes, shoulders and upper back which disappears within a month or so.

Chest:

- Breasts may be enlarged on both boys and girls. This is normal and results from the hormones from the mother.
- There may be a drop of milk coming from the nipple and swelling for a couple of months.
- This will disappear by itself.
- The breasts are tender, so take care not to squeeze.

Genitals:

Females:

- *Labia* (folds of skin around the vaginal opening) may be enlarged and will decrease in size within 2-4 weeks.
- A vaginal discharge (pinkish, small amount) may be present.

This material has been provided by your doctor as an educational tool and is not meant to take the place of professional care. Please consult your doctor for any questions, concerns or changes in your condition.

Males:

- The testicles are swollen initially and will decrease in size within 2-4 weeks.
- Erections are normal.
- The testicles are usually in the scrotum, or they will descend shortly.

Umbilical cord:

- The remaining cord or umbilicus (belly button, navel) will usually fall off in about 10 days.

Contact your doctor if you have any other concerns regarding your newborn.