

Umbilical Cord - Normal Navel Care After Cord Falls Off

Definition

- Questions about how to care for the navel in newborns
- The navel is also called the belly button or umbilicus
- The umbilical cord has already fallen off

Health Information

Normal Cord

- Normal cords don't need any special treatment.
- Just keep them dry (called natural drying).
- Reason: Cords need to dry up, before they will fall off.
- As they dry up, cords normally change color. They go from a shiny yellowish hue, to brown or gray.
- The cord will normally fall off between 1 and 3 weeks.

Normal Navel (Belly Button)

- After the cord has fallen off, the navel will gradually heal.
- It's normal for the center to look red at the point of separation.
- It's not normal if the redness spreads on to the belly.
- It's normal for the navel to ooze some secretions.
- Sometimes, the navel forms a scab. It heals up and falls off on its own.

Care Advice

1. What You Should Know:

- The cord can't fall off too early.
- The average cord falls off between 10 and 14 days. Normal range is 7 to 21 days. Even if it falls off before 7 days, you can follow this advice.
- After the cord has fallen off, the navel will gradually heal.
- It's normal for the center to look red at the point of separation.
- It's not normal if the redness spreads on to the belly.
- It's normal for the navel to ooze some secretions.
- Sometimes the navel forms a scab. Let it heal up and fall off on its own.
- The navel has a small risk of becoming infected.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Normal Navel Care:

- Keep the navel (belly button) clean and dry.
- If there are any secretions, clean them away. Use a wet cotton swab. Then, dry carefully.
- Do this gently to prevent any bleeding.
- Caution: Don't use any rubbing alcohol. Reason: can interfere with healing.

3. Bathing:

- After the cord falls off, continue sponge baths for a few more days.
- Help the belly button area dry up.
- Then, tub baths will be fine.

4. **Diapers:**

- Keep the navel dry to help healing.
- To provide air contact, keep the diaper folded down below the navel.

5. **What to Expect:**

- The belly button should be healed and dry by 7 days.

Call Your Doctor If

- Develops a red streak or redness around belly button
- Fever occurs
- Cloudy discharge occurs
- Your baby starts to look or act abnormal
- You think your baby needs to be seen

Pediatric Care Advice

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