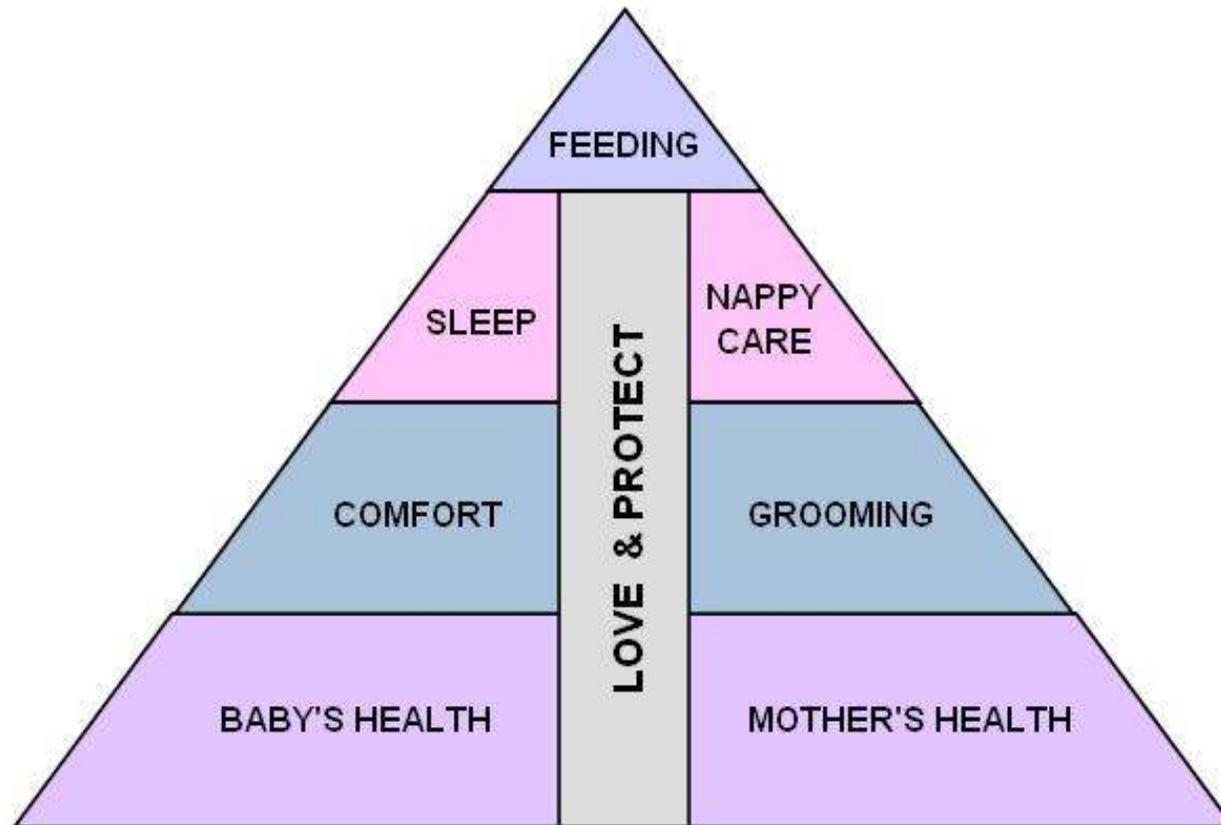


Action Plan Diagram



Feeding

- Breastfeeding is best for your baby BUT...
- Formula/bottle feeding is also fine so don't panic if you can't breastfeed! Consider having a bottle and formula handy just in case.
- A feeding schedule makes life easier for most moms. Just remember to be aware of your little one's changing needs and adapt the schedule accordingly.
- To prevent unnecessary discomfort for your baby, master the art of properly winding/burping him after each feed
- Experts recommend that you don't feed your baby solid food until at least 5 – 6 months of age, so try to resist the urge unless otherwise indicated by a medical practitioner.
- Make sure you and your baby are both comfortable before starting a feeding session.
- Always be prepared for your baby's next feed well ahead of the time.
- Newborn babies tend to have fluctuating appetites, which is usually quite normal, for instance increased appetite during a growth spurt. As long as everything else is OK the fluctuations are probably nothing to be worried about.
- When in doubt rather ASK someone knowledgeable – rather be safe than sorry!

Breastfeeding

- Ensure your latching technique is correct to avoid all kinds of problems.
- Experiment with different feeding positions until you are comfortable and can manage proper latching.
- Take immediate action if you notice broken or cracked skin on your nipple. This is usually a sign of incorrect latching and/or inadequate breast care. It will probably become very painful soon and may also lead to other problems.
- Remember to take adequate nutrition AND hydration when breastfeeding.
- Breast milk comes in essentially 3 forms: colostrum, foremilk and hindmilk, each with a specific function in fulfilling your baby's feeding and health needs.
- Make sure both your breasts get emptied out regularly to prevent uncomfortable engorgement and possible problems like mastitis.
- Don't relieve engorged breasts by using a breast pump, as this will stimulate even more milk production and worsen the problem. Rather relieve the pressure slightly by massaging breasts under a hot shower and sticking to normal feeding times and amounts. Your milk production will soon settle to the correct quantity.
- A little sunlight on your breasts will do wonders for the skin's health. Just ten minutes twice daily is enough.

Bottle Feeding

- Make sure you choose a suitable type of baby formula for your baby's needs and age.
- Take care to select a good brand of bottle that works for your baby. Try it out first before investing in a certain brand of bottle and its accessories.
- Sterilization of bottles is VERY important. Make sure you have adequate equipment and follow the instructions correctly with every bottle. Inadequate hygiene may cause severe illness in a young baby.
- Prevent discomfort, colic and even ear infections by feeding your baby in a more upright position.
- Always make up formula correctly according to the instructions, and follow recommendations with regards to standing time, temperature, hygiene and mixing ratio.
- When you have some time on your hands, work ahead to have the next 2 or 3 feeds ready to be mixed and prepared when needed, like a "production line". This works especially well at night and when travelling.
- If possible, invest in enough bottles to last you through a difficult night until someone can help with the washing up in the morning.

Sleep

- Your newborn baby needs a WHOLE LOT of sleep to be happy and healthy.
- You can help your baby sleep better by creating a suitable sleeping environment.
- Try to establish a regular sleeping schedule for your baby, according to his needs for his specific age. Also take his feeding needs into account, and be flexible when necessary. The sleeping schedule should be a guideline only, not a law.
- Most babies react positively to a sleep-time routine that you repeat every time. They learn to know what to expect next and fall into the routine quite comfortably. This makes them feel safe and secure and will make your life more predictable.
- Make sure your baby is SAFE in his sleeping environment.
- The quality of your baby's day-time sleep will directly influence his night-time sleep, so don't keep your baby awake for too long during the day hoping he will be very tired and sleep well at night.
- Get a mosquito net for your baby if you live in an area where insect bites is a risk, as they can become quite painful and even infected, causing discomfort and/or illness.
- Do your baby a big favour and buy his sleepwear for COMFORT instead of CUTENESS.
- Choose the sleeping arrangement that suits your family's situation best and don't be too concerned about what people say. Do what works for you.

Nappy Care

- Avoid diaper rash by taking care of your baby's bum very carefully, as this is very painful and will definitely cause loads of unhappiness and niggles.
- Prepare a safe, comfortable diaper changing station where you have enough of everything close at hand. Check your supplies regularly, especially before you start changing a messy nappy.
- Good quality nappies can handle more than one wee without leaking or causing discomfort so you don't have to change every wet nappy immediately, but you have to change a soiled nappy as soon as possible to avoid nappy rash.
- A baby should have around 6 or more wet nappies to indicate sufficient feeding.
- As long as a baby's poo has a soft, normal consistency the frequency of soiled nappies is not too important.
- Hard, dry poo that your baby strains to pass is quite possibly a sign of constipation and you should get medical advice if this occurs regularly.
- Your baby's first few nappies will contain meconium, which is a sticky black type of poo that needs to be cleaned with care off your baby's skin. Petroleum jelly and cotton wool is the safest to use.

Comfort

- Keep in mind the adjustment your baby has to go through to get used to the outside world after having the perfect environment in your womb for so many months. It's easy to assault their sensitive senses with too much noise etc. so be considerate and try to help them adapt to the outside world comfortably and in small steps.
- Ensure your baby's clothing and nappy are comfortably, and that his immediate environment is not a source of discomfort, for example and itchy blanket.
- Be aware of the ambient temperature as your baby can't regulate his body temperature as effectively yet.
- Be on the lookout for minor health problems like a blocked nose that can cause discomfort, which can grow into serious niggles if not dealt with in time.
- Always check the basics (feeding, sleep, nappy etc) first before fiddling with small things if your baby seems uncomfortable. You'll be surprised at how easy it is to miss the obvious if you are tired.
- Realize and remember your baby is totally at your mercy for making him comfortable, and try to be thorough and considerate with what you do.
- The most comfortable AND comforting place for your newborn is as close as possible to you – so make sure you cuddle enough, speak to him softly and lovingly and make him feel safe and close to his mommy. Sometimes that is all they are asking for.

Grooming

- Grooming a newborn baby consists mainly of bathing, skin care, hair care, umbilical cord care, nail care and keeping the ears and nose clean.
- Safety is extremely important when bathing your baby (any age baby for that matter) so be very careful. NEVER leave a baby unattended in a bath.
- Although you don't have to lie awake worrying about grooming issues, it will make your baby feel more comfortable if you keep him clean and neat. But don't overdo it.
- The most important thing is that your grooming routine suits you and your baby and that he is healthy and comfortable.
- Try to keep grooming short and stick to the basics, and if you can try to make it fun for baby by playing happy music, singing or anything that will make the experience more pleasant.
- Don't bother spending a fortune on baby products, you only need a few basics.
- Comfort ALWAYS takes priority over beauty when a newborn is concerned. Sorry 😊
- Most babies start enjoying bathing sooner or later, so make it a happy bonding session. Involve Daddy if possible because this is a wonderful task for him to help with, and the extra pair of hands will make things easier for you.

Baby's Health

- Your baby's temperature and appetite are normally good indicators of your baby's immediate state of health.
- It is a good idea to monitor your baby's weight, length and head circumference by having regular checks at your local baby clinic.
- A high fever can be dangerous so rather be too careful and have a doctor check your baby, especially a very young baby.
- Be careful of diarrhoea and vomiting, as your baby can become dehydrated surprisingly fast. Rather get medical help as soon as you notice a persistent problem.
- Rather be too concerned if you are not sure what to do. A medical person will always be able to judge best. Given a little time you will become more experienced and get a feel for when to take your baby to the doctor and when it is OK to wait a little longer.
- Find a doctor/paediatrician that really listens to what you say and makes you feel like you can really trust him with your baby's health.
- Don't be intimidated by people when it comes to your baby's health. People love handing out advice (and often don't mean any harm) but you as the parent have the final say. Get sound medical advice and do what you believe is best.

Mom's Health

- Your baby needs you to be healthy and capable, so don't neglect your own health.
- Find out from your doctor what medication you are allowed to take while breastfeeding as medication will be transferred to your baby via breast milk.
- Do some planning before your baby's birth to make sure you have a plan of action in place to support your own health during those first hectic weeks of motherhood.
- Understand the difference between "baby blues" and actual postpartum depression
- For good quality and quantity breast milk make sure you enjoy regular nutritious meals and stay adequately hydrated. Pay attention to this even if you don't "feel" hungry or thirsty. Take supplements and meal replacements if necessary (just make sure they are allowed if you are breastfeeding).
- It's a good idea to have a plan B in place in case you have post-birth pain or complications of a more serious nature. This will hopefully not be the case but it helps if you have at least thought it through and have a few emergency aids ready like extra frozen meals for the rest of the family. Also try to organize some stand-by help and support in case you may need it.
- If you are breastfeeding or planning to, the health of your breasts is a serious matter. Mastitis can make you anything from mildly to very ill. Rather be too careful and get medical help if necessary.

Love & Protect

- To have a newborn baby to love and protect is a huge honour but also an incredibly important task. You can never love or spoil a new baby too much!
- A lack of love, stimulation and nurture can affect your baby's brain development and not allow him to reach his potential.
- Sick and weak babies that receive love and nurture have been found to have a better chance on surviving. No machine can take the place of human love and touch.
- One of the symptoms of postpartum depression is an inability on the mother's side to nurture and love her baby, emphasising again the danger of this condition and the importance to find help ASAP.
- If you do experience negative thoughts, especially if the thoughts are centred around your baby, share this with someone knowledgeable that you trust and ask for them to monitor you for possible postpartum depression.
- No matter how difficult your circumstances, providing your baby with the love and protection she needs is the single most valuable investment you can make for your child.
- Sometimes it's hard to *feel* love when you are exhausted and the demands just keep coming. It helps to discuss this with other moms to gauge whether you are really just tired or whether you have a problem. Ask someone to take over for an hour or two so you can recover a little and gain some perspective.