

Tips for the first 24 hours after giving birth

Mother

Blood loss: It is normal that you still pass blood in the first few days, the colour will be bright red. You can also lose clots as big as a fist, don't be alarmed by this. If there is too much blood loss (2 maternity bandages completely soaked within half an hour), do not hesitate, but call the midwife.

Peeing and urinating: Try to urinate every two or three hours, even if you don't feel the urge to do so. By urinating regularly, the uterus can contract well and you can limit blood loss. For hygiene and to relieve pain/a burning sensation, we recommend that you rinse with lukewarm water during or after urination. It is a good idea not to go to the toilet alone on the first day after you have given birth. You can get dizzy or faint. Let your partner or someone else help you.

Afterpains: You may suffer from afterpains after childbirth, this is the contraction of the uterus. You can take 1 or 2 tablets of paracetamol (maximum 4 times a day). Paracetamol is not harmful to breastfeeding, but it does relieve the pain. Always consult the midwife.

Sleeping: It is absolutely normal that you don't sleep or hardly sleep the first night. Giving birth gives you a boost of extra energy which makes you very "watchful".

The baby

Sleeping: after the birth, your baby has to recover. It is possible that s/he will sleep a lot. Babies have sufficient reserves to survive the first 24 hours without food.

Temperature: babies are not yet able to regulate their own temperature, so they often need a hot water bottle in bed. Always put the hot water bottle(s) between or on the blankets with the cap down (to prevent leaks). The temperature of a new born should be between 36.5 and 37.5 degrees. Check the temperature (rectal) at each feed with a digital thermometer.

- < 36.0: call the midwife; warm up your baby skin-on-skin or give him two hot water bottles, put on his/her hat and take the temperature again after an hour.

- < 36.5°C or lower: warm up your baby skin-on-skin or give him two hot water bottles, put on his/her hat and take the temperature again after an hour. If the temperature is still too low, call the midwife;

- 36,6°C - 36.9 °C: give a hot water bottle, put on his/her hat;

- 37.0°C - 37.5°C: give a warm water bottle for the night;

- > 37.5°C: remove the heat source.

- > 38.0°C remove the heat source and re-temperature after one hour. If it is still too high, call your midwife.

Peeing / defecation: The baby must have urinated and defecated within 24 hours. The first urine can be red/orange from urine crystals. The first stool of a new born is called meconium and is black and very sticky. Change the nappy regularly, e.g. with every feed.

Spitting / Nausea: Your baby may be nauseous for the first 24-48 hours. This can be caused by swallowing blood/amniotic fluid during birth. So don't be alarmed if your baby starts gagging or spitting, this can be brown in colour as it is old blood from the birth. If this happens, turn the baby to the side so that he can release the mucus better.

Position: Put your baby on his/her back to sleep. Make sure the room is between 18°C and 20 °C. Preferably let your baby sleep in your room, but not in your bed.

Umbilical stump: The umbilical stump may bleed a little bit, this is normal. If there is more blood loss (drop by drop), call the midwife immediately.

Breastfeeding: Before giving milk, you should first urinate yourself, this will reduce the afterpains. To get the breastfeeding going properly, you can safely give milk frequently, this promotes milk production. Milk production has yet to get off to a full start, so not much will come out in the first two days. Only colostrum comes out of the breasts, it contains many good antibodies. Your baby has enough reserves to bridge this period. It is possible that the baby sleeps through the first night after a long or tiresome birth. Make sure that the baby takes to the nipple well (the nipple and areola are completely in the mouth).

Artificial feeding: Offer 10 to 15 cc of artificial food every 3 to 4 hours. At night there may be more time between feeding (not longer than 6 hours). Check the temperature of the milk before offering it to your baby. Your baby may be nauseous in the first 24-48 hours after birth and will therefore not be very hungry for food, do not insist but offer it.

Crying: Because your baby is used to being close to you, s/he can be restless and crying. Try to comfort him/her by holding him/her against you. If s/he keeps crying, check if s/he is hungry, has a wet/dirty diaper or is too cold/warm.

Important: In case of an emergency or serious doubt, you can and may call the midwife at any time, even at night.

Instruction-movies: [Voorlichtingsfilmpjes | De Zorgboog](#)