

Take a class on infant care through your hospital. It will teach you the basics on holding, bathing, feeding, etc. It will make you feel much more comfortable in the first few weeks when your baby seems so fragile.

## Newborn as a Reflexive Being



After making the dramatic transition to life outside the womb, your baby is faced with the task of learning to survive in his completely new environment. Fortunately, nature has provided him with many reflexes to maximize his success until he is able to do certain things voluntarily. Your own instinctual responses will guide you in meeting your baby's needs.

Just as a mother's breasts are programmed to provide milk to nourish her newborn, a baby automatically knows how to respond to attempts to feed him. When you stimulate his cheek, mouth, or lips with the nipple of a breast or a bottle, his head will turn toward it, his mouth will open, and his tongue will move forward. This movement of his head and mouth is called the rooting reflex and helps him find a source of nourishment. As soon as the inside of his sensitive mouth is stimulated, he will automatically suck and swallow in a coordinated fashion.

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A similar reaction, the hand to mouth reflex occurs if you stroke your baby's cheek or the palm of his hand. His mouth will "root" and his arm will flex. After his hand and mouth find each other, he may suck his fist energetically for several minutes. This reflex helps babies suck and swallow any mucus that might have

## BABY GIFTS & GIFT BASKETS

Accept help whenever offered! If friends ask you what they can do, suggest they prepare meals for you or babysit your older children. Hire someone to clean; send the little ones to day camp. Nobody will accuse you of being selfish or a bad mother. It's the only way to keep your sanity.

[Baby Gifts and Gift Baskets](#) provides timely and practical information for new moms, as well as gift ideas for pregnancy, baby showers, and to celebrate birth:

### New Baby Gift Ideas

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been clogging their upper airways [nose and mouth] after birth.

If you slowly pull your baby to a sitting position from his back, he will make a gallant attempt to keep his head upright. This response is called the righting reflex. Because his head is heavy and his muscles are not yet strong enough to hold it steady, his head will wobble back and forth. You will quickly learn to support his head when you pick him up.

## Personalized Hooded Fleece Blankets



These hooded character fleece blankets are just adorable! Perfect for keeping your little one warm and cozy. Sized at a generous 30"x 40", this blanket may be used by baby through the toddler years. An excellent gift for new baby, birthday or just because! Comes personalized with child's name for that personal touch!

**Price: \$ 40.00**

[\*\*Buy Now!\*\*](#)

For the first few weeks, your baby will lie with one cheek down when on his back. As his head turns to one side, the arm on the same side straightens and the opposite arm bends. This posture resembles a "fencing position" and is called the tonic neck reflex. Lying in this position gives your baby an opportunity to discover his own hand in the weeks to come. Because it is difficult to turn over on an outstretched arm, this reflex will have to fade before your baby will be able to turn over.

A newborn baby has a very strong grasping reflex. If you place your finger in his palm, his fingers will curl tightly around it. The automatic grasp reflex fades over the first two to three months to enable your baby to grasp objects voluntarily. Gentle pressure against the sole of his foot causes his toes to curl downward. Stroking the side of his soles will cause his toes to spread and the big toe to extend upward. This Babinski reflex is the opposite of the normal adult response, in which the big toe turns downward.

Holding your baby upright and pressing the sole of one foot at a time to a firm surface will elicit the stepping reflex. He will alternately bend each leg as though walking. This remarkable reflex fades rapidly but reappears months later, as your baby prepares himself for voluntary walking.

Stroking one leg causes the other to bend, cross the first leg, and push away the offending object. He moves as though to escape from a harmful stimulus.

When placed on his belly, your baby will lift his head and turn it from side to side. He may even attempt to crawl. His responses make it virtually impossible to smother when he is lying on his stomach on a firm, flat surface. [For this reason, you need not worry that your baby will have trouble breathing when prone. You should, however, keep excess bedclothes, toys, and stuffed animals out of the way.]

The most dramatic reflex is the Moro, or startle response. A loud noise or rough handling will cause your baby to throw back his arms and legs, extend his neck, and cry out. Then he will bring his arms together in an embrace and flex his legs. Unfortunately, your baby's response disturbs him further. His own furious crying only serves to startle him again. You can help break this cycle by calmly bringing his flailing extremities close to his body; applying steady, gentle pressure with your hand against his chest and abdomen; or simply holding him securely against your own body. By three months of age, this reflex will disappear.