

Up until the birth of your baby, the focus of your pregnancy was probably on labor and delivery. Perhaps you painted the nursery and had a baby shower. But the truth is, all of this was just leading up to the big moment when your baby entered the world.

Newborn

At first sight, your newborn may not be quite what you had expected. For the first half minute or so, his skin might be bluish grey, and he may appear lifeless. That may be a shock if you are not expecting it, but this is the color of all babies in the uterus. As your baby begins breathing and more oxygen enters his body, his color will turn pinker or ruddier—first the head and body, then the arms and legs, and last the feet and hands.



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Your baby will be soaking wet, streaked with blood, and smeared with vernix, a white sticky substance. Some babies have a great deal of vernix all over their bodies, and some have only small amounts, only in the creases and folds. Vernix is almost like a hand cream, in that it protects the baby's skin while he is floating in amniotic fluid.

His face may be swollen and he might have long fingernails. You may also be surprised by the size of your baby's genitals. The size and color subside in a few days, when their genitals take on a more normal appearance.

Immediate Care

Even though most babies do not really need it, caregivers routinely suction babies' noses and mouths very soon after birth to remove excess amniotic fluid and mucus. In fact, sometimes they begin suctioning when only the baby's head is out. It is done with a rubber

BABY GIFTS & GIFT BASKETS

When you arrive home from the hospital with a newborn baby, the simplest of tasks can seem overwhelming. For many parents, just holding the baby is nerve-racking: they're so tiny and fragile-looking! And you may know in principle how to change a diaper, but the reality is so...messy!

[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:

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bulb syringe or with a little jar and tube called a mucous trap. The mucous trap is used if the baby's airway seems to be very congested or if the baby was under stress during labor and breathing problems are anticipated at the time of birth.

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Your baby's umbilical cord will be clamped in two places close to his abdomen. Then the cord will be cut between the two clamps. Sometimes the father cuts the cord. Otherwise, the doctor does it. Even though there is a spurt of blood when the cord is cut, neither you or your baby will feel it at all, sense there are no nerves in the umbilical cord. Then your baby will be either be placed on your abdomen or taken to a special warm bed in the corner of the room for examination and other care. If he is placed on your abdomen, you will feel the warm, wet baby on your now soft belly. Many women find this a very pleasant sensation.

Your baby is dried off by rubbing briskly with soft towels to keep him from getting a chill [a major concern of your doctor]. Your baby will be wrapped in a warm blanket or two, and his head will be covered. In fact, it is a very good idea to have a warm little hat to place on the baby's head as soon as possible after the birth because the baby's head is such a large part of his body that a lot of heat can be lost through it.