

Kawartha Community Midwives

When should I contact the midwife?

You and your baby will likely enjoy good health and a normal postpartum period. However, your midwife will talk with you about the following possible problems.

THE BABY

- ⊗ will not stop crying
- ⊗ does not breastfeed 8 – 12 times a day
- ⊗ shows signs of dehydration, jaundice or infection

Dehydration: Signs could include fewer than normal wet or dirty diapers, dark yellow or brick coloured urine after day 3 of life, a quiet, “good” baby who sleeps a lot and doesn’t wake to feed at least 8 times in 24 hours, dry lips and inside of mouth, parched skin that doesn’t spring back to the touch, a high-pitched or dry sounding cry, and a yellow skin tone.

Do not rely on a sunken fontanelle (*the small soft spot on the top front part of your baby’s head*) as a sign of dehydration, because the fontanelle fluctuates with feeding and even breathing.

It is not always easy to tell when a disposable diaper is wet. If you are concerned that your baby is not voiding, line the diaper with facial tissue and wait a few hours. Or, since disposable diapers get heavier when wet, compare with the weight of a dry diaper.

Jaundice: About 60% of normal, full term babies develop jaundice (*which is yellowed skin or the white part of the eyes*) on day 2 or 3. It is usually due to the inability of the baby’s immature liver to metabolize bilirubin. When your baby is born she no longer needs as many red blood cells to carry the oxygen. The extra red blood cells are broken down to bilirubin, (*which is disposed of through urine, stools, and through the skin*), and heme which is stored in the liver.

Frequent nursing and exposure to sunlight will help to hasten the jaundice on its way. Your midwife will be monitoring it and may make further recommendations.

Infection: If your baby feels hot, has a temperature greater than 37.4 degrees C or 100 degrees F under the armpit, does not feed well, is sleepy or

irritable, has a persistent skin rash or breathes quickly (*more than 60 breaths per minute*) – call your midwife.

Many healthy babies occasionally have one or two of these symptoms, but if any persist - or several are present at the same time - **your midwife wants to hear from you.**

FOR YOURSELF

The following signs could indicate that you are overly fatigued, running an infection, or experiencing postpartum depression.

Don’t ignore them.

Tell your midwife if you:

- ⊗ have vaginal bleeding that is more than a heavy period, or soaks a pad in less than 2 hours.
- ⊗ have passed a blood clot as big as the palm of your hand and your bleeding does not immediately decrease.
- ⊗ have bright red blood 10 days or more after birth.
- ⊗ have vaginal discharge that smells foul. (Someone across the room can smell it)
- ⊗ have pain that is not relieved by acetaminophen.
- ⊗ feel feverish, have chills, or a temperature greater than 38 degrees C.
- ⊗ see worsening redness, swelling, oozing or separation of your tear, episiotomy, or caesarian incision.
- ⊗ have red, tender, or lumpy areas in a breast that don’t clear after nursing your baby.
- ⊗ feel depressed, unable to cope, or are worried about your baby’s or your own physical safety.