

MOUNT ROGERS HEALTH DISTRICT

BABY CARE

Helping you help your baby

NEONATAL ABSTINENCE SYNDROME

WHAT TO EXPECT



During pregnancy drugs taken by the mother pass to the baby. Neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) happens when a baby goes through withdrawal from certain substances after birth.

Your love and care is very important to your baby. As the parent, you are an important member of your baby's care team. You can help comfort your baby and also watch for signs of problems.

What to expect at the hospital

The symptoms your baby has will depend on what substance was taken during pregnancy, the amount, and how close to birth your baby was exposed to the substance.

How severe your baby's symptoms are will depend on if your baby was exposed to other substances during pregnancy like illegal drugs, alcohol, or tobacco.

Withdrawal symptoms from methadone and Subutex may not happen until 3-7 days after your baby is born.

Symptoms your baby may show in the hospital include:

- high-pitched cries
- fussiness
- stiff arms/legs/back
- trouble sleeping
- shaking
- jitters
- lots of sucking
- problems eating
- vomiting
- fast breathing
- stuffy nose
- sneezing or yawning often
- diarrhea
- diaper area irritation
- irritation on face/back of the head/arms due to restlessness
- trouble gaining weight
- seizures



Your baby may get medicine to help with withdrawal, called replacement therapy. At the hospital, weaning your baby from medicine can take from a few days to a few weeks.

The length of time your baby is in the hospital will depend on how severe your baby's symptoms are, and if your baby was born early. Your baby may stay in the hospital for a few weeks or longer, depending on their symptoms.

During your hospital stay

There are many ways you can help your baby with these symptoms.

Staying with your baby at the hospital, called rooming-in, is an important way to help your baby get better. Your baby may get better faster and be able to go home sooner if you room-in with your baby. This also helps you bond with your baby.

Breastfeeding is also important. Breastfeeding may help you feel less stressed and help you with your drug treatment. It may help your baby leave the hospital sooner and have fewer problems with NAS.

Things to try at home:

- turn off the TV
- turn the lights down or off
- put your phone on silent or a low ring tone
- touch your baby gently
- speak in a quiet voice
- limit visitors
- only wake your baby for feeding and schedule other activities like diapering when your baby is awake
- hold your baby upright, and rock in a smooth up and down motion
- don't pat your baby's back, but you can gently rub it
- keep your baby's arm tucked into their chest
- give a pacifier during times like diaper changes or dressing, or other times your baby seems to want to suck

Swaddling your baby may be helpful in the hospital (ask the nurses), but you probably do not need to do it once you go home.

Skin to skin contact can be helpful for you and your baby – baby should be wearing only a diaper, then lie on your chest. Put a light blanket over both of you, and make sure to keep your baby's face uncovered.

What to expect at home

For most babies, some symptoms will last for up to 4-6 months after leaving the hospital.

When you come home, your baby may still show:

- problems feeding
- slow weight gain
- crankiness
- problems sleeping
- sneezing and a stuffy nose
- trouble breathing

Babies with NAS can cry more often and more easily.

If you get upset, take a deep breath and walk away for a few minutes.

Never shake or cover your baby's face to stop them from crying.

Make sure to take a break to rest when you need it.

At home

The same things that helped your baby feel better at the hospital can help your baby feel better at home.

Make sure to have a regular routine for your baby at home.

Feeding

- keep breastfeeding, and ask for help if you need it
- feed your baby when they seem hungry, in a quiet room with the lights low
- burp your baby often, and don't sway or walk while feeding

Caring for your baby

- touch and move your baby slowly and gently
- gently rock or sway your baby to calm them
- talk softly
- hold the baby close to you
- use an infant swing (while you are awake)
- use protective skin creams
- use infant massage



Breastfeeding help

Breastfeeding is important while mothers are in a drug treatment program.

If you change or stop your treatment program, talk to your pediatrician about weaning.

When you are ready to wean your baby from breastfeeding, contact your baby's pediatrician if you are still on medication for drug treatment, to make sure your baby does not have problems with withdrawal.

If you need help breastfeeding and:

- Are a WIC client:

- Contact your local WIC office and speak to a breastfeeding peer counselor, Baby Care nurse, certified lactation consultant (CLC), or international board certified lactation consultant (IBCLC) and/or
- Contact your local La Leche League peer support group

- Are not a WIC client:

- Contact your Baby Care nurse or local La Leche League peer support group

La Leche League Information

Bristol/Washington County – Sara, 423-764-1548

Grayson – Tiffany, 276-768-7147;

Scottie, hillssofthehome@gmail.com

Carroll – Amanda, 276-728-3231

<https://www.facebook.com/LLLMountainEmpire>

<https://www.facebook.com/lalecheleagueofgraysoncountyva/>



Your doctor is required to notify social services when a baby is born exposed to substances. Social services or Early Intervention may become involved with your family to help provide services for substance abuse treatment, developmental needs, or other supportive programs and resources.

Mount Rogers Health District Offices

District office: 276-781-7450

Bland County—276-688-3642

Bristol City—276-642-7335

Carroll County—276-730-3180

Galax City—276-236-6127

Grayson County—276-773-2961

Smyth County—276-781-7460

Washington County—276-676-5604

Wythe County—276-228-5507

My important numbers

Obstetrician: _____

Pediatrician: _____

Social worker: _____

Counselor: _____

WIC nurse: _____

Baby Care nurse: _____

Other: _____

Other: _____