

What's in a nappy?



NCT Information sheet

How to know your baby is feeding well

The contents of your baby's nappies change day by day at first. These changes can help you know if feeding is going well. Ask your midwife if there is anything you feel concerned about.

On days 1-2

Wees: 2 or more per day

Poos: 1 or more per day. Poo at this stage is called 'meconium' or 'mec' for short. It's very darkgreen/brown/black and sticky, and it's already in the bowel at the time of birth.



On days 3-4

Wees: 3 or more per day. The amount of wee increases, and the nappies feel heavier than before

Poos: 2 or more per day. The colour changes and looks more green. These poos are called 'changing stools' and they change because your baby is taking in more milk and digesting it.



On days 5-6

Wees: 5 or more heavy nappies per day (see what 'heavy' means overleaf)

Poos: At least 2 soft, yellow poos per day. They're yellow, because there is no more 'mec' in the bowel.



Q. How do I know if my baby is weeing often enough? Disposable nappies just absorb the wee.

A. All babies should produce several heavy nappies every day. If you use disposable nappies, do the 'heavy nappy' test with water so you know what you are looking for (see over). You can also place a cloth inside the nappy, which will stay wet when your baby wees.

Any questions about your baby's health or feeding, just ask your midwife.

Day 7 onwards

Wees: 6 or more heavy nappies per day

Poos: At least 2 soft, yellow poos per day, greater than size of a £2 coin – not just 'skid marks'. You might notice little seedy particles in it – that's fine.



Q. Is it OK for my baby not to poo every day?

A. Yes, but only after the first few weeks. A baby who does not poo for a day or more in the first week or so may be showing you he needs to feed more often, or more effectively (he may also be fine – babies do very occasionally skip a day early on). Ask your midwife about this.

What's a 'heavy nappy'?

Try this test – pour 3 tablespoons or water (45ml) into a dry nappy, and pick it up. That's how heavy your baby's nappy will be, after the first 5-6 days.

These guidelines apply to all babies, whether they're breastfed, formula fed or fed on both. However, a formula fed baby's poos may be less soft and less frequent, compared with a breastfed baby's of the same age.

Some babies get to the 'yellow poo' stage sooner than day 5-6, and that's OK. It means your baby is feeding very effectively, and probably taking in more milk.

After the first week: babies continue to wee and poo several times each day for the first few weeks.

After that time, some (not all) babies poo much less often. Breastfed babies may go many days without producing any poo at all – that's normal, too. As long as your baby is growing well, and the poo he produces is soft, you don't need to be worried. Ask your health visitor about this, if you need to.

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Other nappy contents you may see include



Urates, sometimes known as brick dust because that's what it looks like: tiny orange or pinkish crystals.

They are harmless: they are salts in the urine, and tend to show up in the very early days. Most babies will pass them once only. They can be a sign your baby needs a little help to feed more often or more effectively. Ask your midwife.

False menstruation or pseudo menstruation is harmless. It is a very light bleed from the vagina in some baby girls. It comes from the effects of your own hormones on her system, and it soon stops.

