Natural Newborn Care http://www.slightlysteady.com/natural-newborn-care/

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**If you’re interested in avoiding some of the chemicals (and costs) common in most baby’s first days, here are some tips for natural newborn care.**

*Note: Not all of these will be possible for all moms, all babies, or all situations. That’s okay. Nothing is more important in the life of a child than love – so whether or not you’re able to do everything “naturally,” just loving your little one is meeting their greatest natural need. -Jaime*

1. **Breastfeed:** Of course, even if you don’t do anything else naturally, breastfeeding your baby is of the greatest long-term benefit.**However, even though it sounds like such a simple thing, it’s not exactly easy for most moms.** I was so discouraged by all the difficulties we encountered during those first few days that I literally made it a goal just to make it to two weeks. Then, when I made it to two weeks, I decided to shoot for a month. Somewhere along the way, it got easier, and by the time she weaned herself at 15 months, I was thrilled with the results *(10 lbs below my pre-baby weight even though I was 20 weeks preggers with the next baby, K had never had any illnesses worse than teething-related stuffiness, we hadn’t spent a dime on formula or had to deal with the formula-can waste – and nursing itself had become an easy and painless five-minute cuddle session).* **Still, all that would have been impossible if it hadn’t been for a lot of prayer, a lot of stubbornness, a lot of encouragement from friends and family, and a lot of great breastfeeding advice**.

**Remember: Breastfeeding is natural, but it does NOT come naturally. You and your baby both have to learn how to do it!*(If all else fails and breastfeeding is simply not possible for you, there are still some  very natural options available to you.****If you’re interested in recieving donor milk, check out*[*Eats on Feets;*](http://www.eatsonfeets.org/)*if that’s too “out there” for you, the closest thing to human milk is goat’s milk; it’s nearly identical in nutrient content with the exception of the B vitamin content;*

**2.) Get Skin-on-skin Contact as Soon as Possible after Birth:**The benefits of skin-on-skin contact after delivery are plentiful – but in my mind, the absolute biggest reason to do it is because**YOU EARNED IT**. Whether you delivered vaginally or by c-section, whether you delivered at full-term or had a wee little preemie, whether you had a complicated or smooth pregnancy, whether you vomitted for months or never felt a day of morning sickness,**dadgummit mama, you deserve to be the first person who holds that little baby!** There are other benefits, of course, such as an easier establishment of the nursing relationship – but number one with a bullet is just seeing the fruits of your labor.

**3.) Use Golden seal for cord care instead of rubbing alcohol:**Simple enough, right? I did use rubbing alcohol on a q-tip to clean K’s cord stump, but this time around, yeah, no. Rubbing alcohol, as I’ve since learned, is a [very toxic chemical when ingested](http://www.ehow.com/about_5371354_rubbing-alcohol.html) – and since skin absorbs what you put on it, it’s like your baby is ingesting a little bit of a dangerous substance when you rub it on. Golden seal it is!

**4.) Olive oil on the tushy to deal with newborn meconium:** I learned this one from my MW. After we got in some snuggles, my midwife gently wiped K down with a wet washcloth – then she rubbed olive oil all over her little tushy. Later, my mom changed K’s first poo diaper, and suddenly was raving to me about what a great idea the olive oil was. Without it, you really have to scrub at your new baby’s skin to get that sticky stuff off – it’s literally a tar-like consistency! If there’s a barrier of EVOO on your baby, though, it wipes off with ease. We kept a little container of EVOO by the changing table until we knew all the meconium was out of her little system!

**5.) Olive oil for cradle cap:** It can be some nasty-looking stuff, that cradle cap. Technically, it’s purely a cosmetic thing. You don’t \*have\* to do anything with it. But if your baby’s otherwise flawless beauty is being marred by some nasty-looking cradle cap, simply rub a dime-sized dollop of EVOO over your LO’s scalp and let it sit for a few minutes. Gently comb it out, and watch all the yucky stuff loosen and come free. Afterwards, you can bathe baby to remove the lingering EVOO, or just leave it there as a moisturizer.

**6.) Treat rashes, eye infections, and pretty much everything else with breast milk:** I kept hearing this idea bandied about in my mommy group – and not just from the granola moms, either. It seemed like every lactating woman with a problem treated it with breast milk. One woman even treated her husband’s eye infection with an eye dropper full of breast milk (I mentioned this to my hubby. He gagged at the very thought. Some people are so close-minded). I can vouch for breast milk working on skin irritations for K – and on more than one occasion, I’ve wished that I had saved a little frozen pouch of that magic elixir for all the rashes, dry patches, and irritations she’s had since she weaned. Next time, I vow that I will. It’s truly liquid gold.

**7.) Cloth diaper**: Yes. Yes, it does involve some work. Thank you for recognizing that. However, it is nowhere near the drudgery that was your mama’s cloth diapering. We, the new moms of the CD world, don’t use the pins and plastic pants of yesteryear. We have Snappis. We have lovely absorbant prefolds. We have super cute, breathable, adjustable covers. We have pockets and AIO’s that go on exactly like disposables do (so easy, even a husband, grandparent or babysitter would be totally fine changing them!). Moreover, it’s not just the thrifty option or the green option – it’s the healthy option. Disposable diapers are still manufactured using petrolatum-based absorbent cores, an unless you buy the super-pricey eco-sposies, you’ll be exposing your baby not only to the chemicals within the diaper, but also residues of the chemicals used in processing the diapers ([click here to read more about the potential health risks associated with disposable diapers](http://www.ithoughtiknewmama.com/2011/08/the-health-impact-of-disposable-diapers/)).

**8.) Use Cloth Wipes with Homemade Wipes Solution**: Just as there are chemicals in disposable diapers, there’s plenty not to love about disposable wipes. Yes, they’re convenient. It’s nice to be able to wipe the poo and throw it away – but really, if you are cloth diapering, it’s no extra work. I just stick the crumpled, dirty wipe right into my soiled cloth diaper and toss the whole thing into my wet bag. No extra work. It’s also an [incredible savings financially](http://www.slightlysteady.com/cloth-wipes-pay-yourself-30hr-to-wipe-that-rear/), and making the [wipes spray](http://www.slightlysteady.com/cloth-wipes-spray-recipe/) takes mere seconds.

**9.) Use Coconut Oil for Rashes and Dry Skin:** Since I don’t have any more of my trusty breast milk, and since not all moms will have ready access to that anyway, I switched to using coconut oil. It was awesome in [curing K’s yeast rash](http://www.slightlysteady.com/cloth-diaper-problems-curing-yeast-rash/), thanks to the natural yuck-killing properties in extra virgin coconut oil. I’ve also loved using it on dry patches of her skin in the winter. It makes my baby girl smell absolutely yummy, too. Gotta love yummy-smelling little dumplings!