

Caring for Babies Going Through Withdrawal

What is withdrawal?

Newborn withdrawal can happen after a baby is exposed to certain substances before birth. Symptoms arise as the baby's body adjusts to life outside the womb and is cut off from the substances the mother used.

Treatment

The treatment for a newborn in withdrawal depends on the symptoms.

Your baby's care may include the following:

- **Extra monitoring:** Your baby will be checked frequently in the hospital. Depending on the symptoms the care team sees, your baby may need tests or stay in the hospital longer.
- **Medication:** Some babies need medication to manage symptoms or to help their bodies adjust to life without the substance they were exposed to in pregnancy.
- **Sensitive Care:** All newborns need good care. However, a baby in withdrawal needs special care to help them rest, eat, and develop normally.

Symptoms and how to relieve them

Prolonged crying

- Hold your baby close to your body
- Decrease loud noises and bright lights
- Humming and gentle rocking

Sleeplessness

- Reduce noise and lights
- Avoid too much touching
- Soft, gentle music and rocking
- Make sure baby has a clean diaper and dry bottom
- Feed baby on demand

Excessive sucking of fists

- Cover baby's hands with gloves or mittens
- Avoid lotions or creams on baby's hands
- Keep areas of damaged skin clean

Difficult or poor feeding

- Feed small amounts often
- Feed in quiet, calm surroundings
- Allow time to rest between sucking

Sneezing, stuffy nose, or breathing troubles

- Keep baby's mouth and nose clean
- Avoid overdressing or wrapping baby too tightly
- Smaller feeds
- Keep baby in semi sitting position, well supported
- Do not place baby to sleep on tummy

Vomiting

- Burp baby each time she stops sucking and after feed
- Support baby's cheeks and lower jaw to enhance sucking and swallowing

Trembling

- Keep baby in a warm, quiet room
- Avoid excessive handling of baby

Fever

- Keep clothing to a minimum
- Avoid too many bedclothes
- Seek medical help if baby's temperature stays elevated for more than 4 hours

Statistics

> 15 MINUTES

Every 15 minutes, a baby is born **suffering from opioid withdrawal.**

> 50-75%

Nearly 50-75% of infants exposed to opioids in uterine **require medical assistance for withdrawal.**

> 3X BABIES

The number of babies born in the U.S. suffering from withdrawal **has tripled within the last 15 years.**