



**Caring for
High Risk Babies**

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**All babies need care,
particularly in the first
few weeks after birth. But
some babies are more at
risk, and so need special
care.**

**This book tells you about
how to identify such
babies and what special
care is required.**

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**Who is a
High Risk Baby?**



A high risk baby is one whose chances of falling seriously ill, and even dying, are higher.

High risk babies include:

Babies with low birth weight	Weight less than 2000 grams.
Babies who are preterm	B orn before the mother completes 8 months and 14 days of pregnancy.
Babies who do not take feeds on the day of birth.	





Weight of High Risk Babies

1 to 14 days	Less than 2 kg
15 to 21 days	Less than 2 kg 100 grams
22 to 27 days	Less than 2 kg 200 grams
28th day	Less than 2 kg 300 grams



A baby's weight is an indicator of whether the baby is a high risk baby or not. A baby's weight needs to be taken immediately after birth, or as soon as possible. At the time of first weighing, the baby needs to be of a minimum weight, below which the baby is considered high risk.

Even a baby of weight between 2 kg and 2 kg 500 grams at birth is underweight. But at 2 kg the risk of disease or death becomes much higher.

If the weight of the baby does not increase, the family should consult an ASHA.



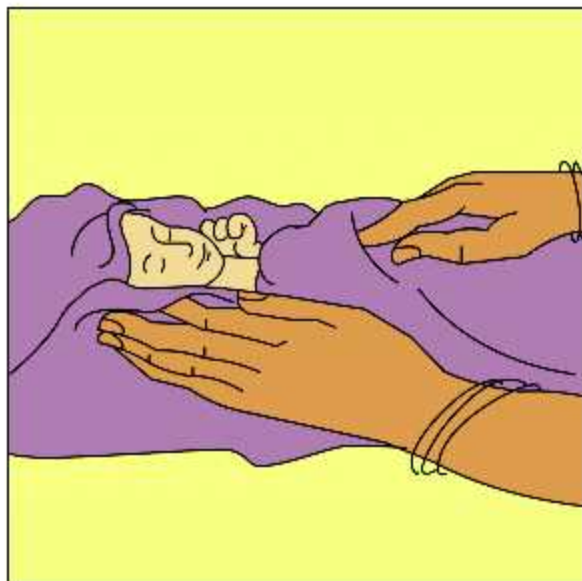
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**What kind of care do
High Risk Babies require?**



Keep the baby warm. From the very first day, make sure the baby is properly clothed and wrapped.

In winter, cover the baby with a blanket.

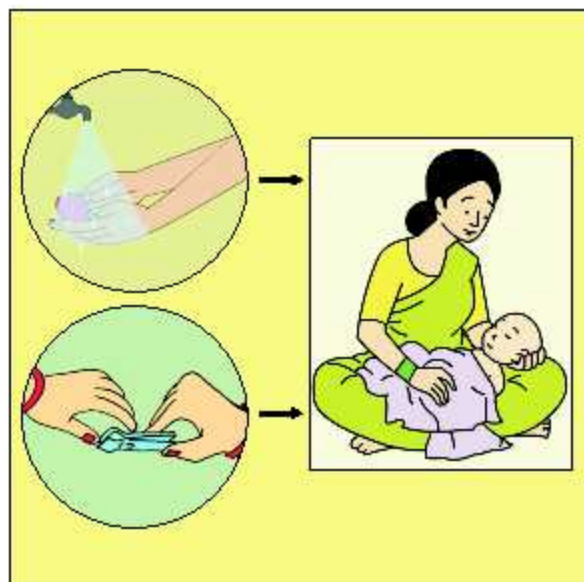




The baby should not be bathed until the baby's weight is at least 2000 grams. This could take a few weeks.

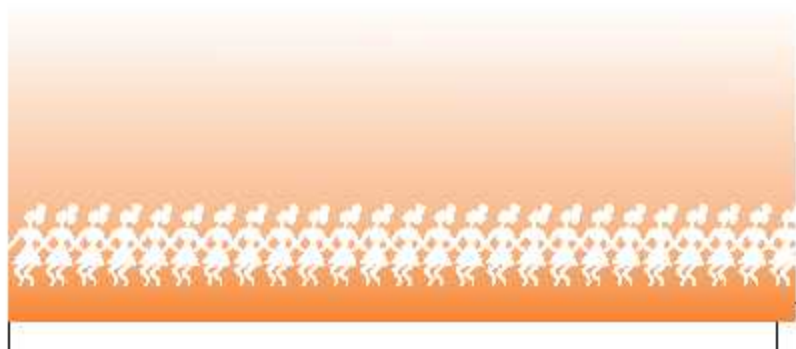
Until then the baby can be cleaned by wiping gently with a soft, clean cloth.





Before touching the baby, ensure that the mother's (or other family members') hands have been washed properly with soap.

The mother's hands should be kept clean, her nails cut regularly and her hands washed before she feeds the baby.

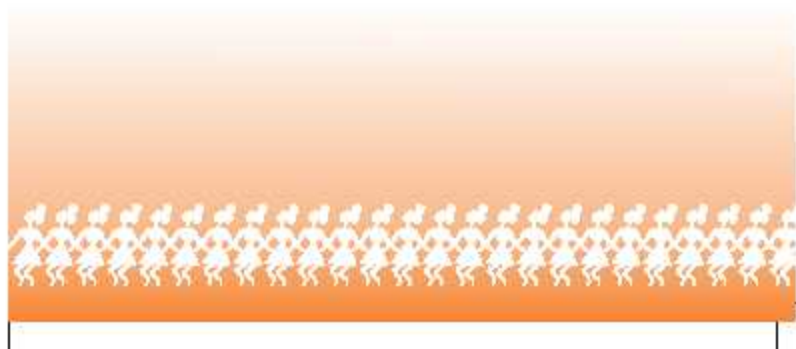




High risk babies need to be fed more frequently.

They should be breastfed every two hours.

Early and exclusive breastfeeding is absolutely essential for high risk babies.





If the baby's weight does not increase from the second week onwards, contact the ASHA. She will consult her supervisor or the PHC doctor.

Call an ANM or a doctor or take the baby to them at once if:

- The baby's limbs become limp
- The baby stops feeding
- The baby has chest indrawing
- The baby has fever
- The baby is cold to the touch



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Breastfeeding High Risk Babies



Breastmilk is the complete food for babies in general, and high risk babies in particular. Breastmilk not only has the right nutrients, it is also easily digestible.

Breastmilk helps such babies to fight infections.

Breastfeeding keeps the baby close to the mother and, therefore, warm.





While breastfeeding, the underarm or alternate underarm hold provides more support. So the mother should use these positions as far as possible.

The baby must be breastfed every two-three hours. If the baby is asleep, she/he can be woken up by gently rubbing a damp cloth over the face.





Some babies who are very small may not be able to suckle. In such cases, the mother should express breastmilk into a clean bowl, and then feed the baby using a clean spoon.

Milk should be expressed, and the baby fed, every two-three hours.

The mother should learn how to express breastmilk.





The total amount of milk should be given over 8-12 feeds (that is, once every two-three hours).

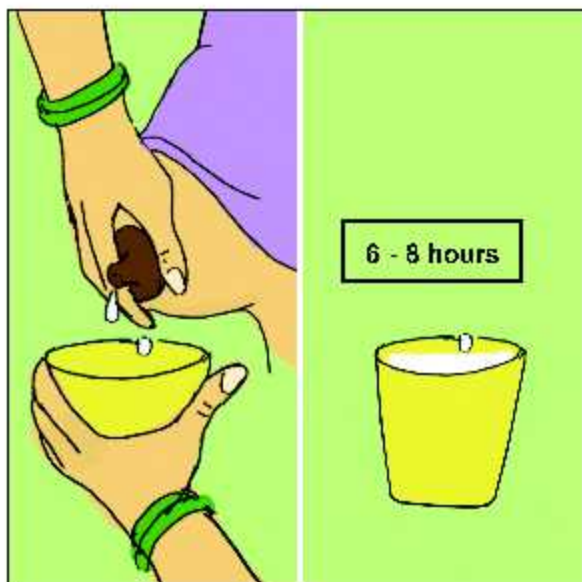




Once the baby is able to suckle, she/he should be put to the breast as often as possible.

Along with this, feeding with the spoon should continue until the mother is sure the baby is getting sufficient milk directly from the breast.





Milk expressed after the first 72 hours can be kept at room temperature for about six to eight hours.

This knowledge may come in use if mother has to leave the baby and go out for a short time.









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