

# Umbilical Cord - Delayed Separation Past 3 Weeks

## Definition

- Cord is still attached after 3 weeks
- The navel is also called the belly button or umbilicus
- The piece of cord that stays on the baby is called the umbilical stump

## Health Information

### Normal Cord

- Normal cords don't need any special treatment.
- Just keep them dry (called natural drying).
- Reason: Cords need to dry up, before they will fall off.
- As they dry up, cords normally change color. They go from a shiny yellowish hue, to brown or gray.
- The cord will normally fall off between 1 and 3 weeks.

### Normal Navel (Belly Button)

- After the cord has fallen off, the navel will gradually heal.
- It's normal for the center to look red at the point of separation.
- It's not normal if the redness spreads on to the belly.
- It's normal for the navel to ooze some secretions.
- Sometimes, the navel forms a scab. It heals up and falls off on its own.

## Care Advice

1. **Overview:**
  - Most cords fall off between 10 and 14 days. Normal range is 7 to 21 days.
  - All cords slowly fall off on their own.
  - Keep being patient.
  - Here is some care advice that should help.
2. **Stop Alcohol:**
  - If you have been using rubbing alcohol to the cord, stop doing so.
  - Rubbing alcohol can kill the good bacteria that help the cord fall off.
3. **Diaper:**
  - Help the cord dry up faster by keeping the diaper folded below it.
  - Option: Cut out a wedge of the disposable diaper. Then seal the edge with tape.
  - Air contact helps the cord stay dry.

## Call Your Doctor If

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- Cord starts to look infected
- Fever occurs
- Cord is still on for more than 6 weeks
- Your baby starts to look sick or act abnormal
- You think your child needs to be seen

### **Pediatric Care Advice**

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