

Umbilical Cord - Minor Infection of Cord or Navel

Definition

- Umbilicus (navel) has a cloudy discharge or even some dried pus on the surface
- 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

Cause

- A cloudy discharge usually is from an infection on top of the skin.
- This can be caused by normal skin bacteria.
- A small amount of pus may even be present.

Omphalitis: Serious Complication

- Definition. Bacterial infection of the umbilical stump with spread to the skin around it. It's a medical emergency.
- How Often. 1 out of 200 newborns.
- Symptoms. Redness spreads around the navel. The area may be tender, swollen and have a foul odor.

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- The belly button will ooze secretions for several days after the cord falls off.
- Normal secretions are clear or blood tinged mucus.
- A cloudy discharge is usually a mild infection.
- This can be from normal skin bacteria.
- A small amount of pus may be present.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. Clean the Navel:

- Clean the navel (belly button) 2 times a day.
- Use a wet cotton swab or cloth.
- Clean away any dried secretions or pus.
- Do this gently to prevent any bleeding.
- Caution: Don't use any rubbing alcohol. Reason: Can interfere with healing.

3. Antibiotic Ointment:

- If any pus is present, use an antibiotic ointment such as Polysporin.
- No prescription is needed.
- Put a tiny amount on the navel.
- Do this 2 times per day after the area has been cleaned with warm water.
- Do this for 2 days. After that, use the antibiotic ointment only if you see more pus.

4. Bathing:

- Do not use tub baths until the cord falls off. Also the navel should be well healed.

5. **Diapers:**

- Keep the belly button dry to help healing.
- To provide air contact, keep the diaper folded down. Keep it below the cord and belly button.

6. **What to Expect:**

- With treatment, the cloudy discharge and pus should be gone in 2 to 3 days.
- The navel should become dry and healed by 7 days.

Call Your Doctor If

- Develops a red streak or redness around the belly button
- Fever occurs
- Cloudy discharge not gone after 3 days of using this care advice
- Your baby starts to look or act abnormal
- You think your baby needs to be seen

Pediatric Care Advice

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