

## Common Difficulties with Term Newborns

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### ABOUT THE STUDY

Welcoming a newborn into the world is a joyous occasion, but it also comes with a set of challenges as parents and healthcare professionals adapt to the unique needs of the term newborn. While many infants thrive in the early days of life, some encounter common problems that require attention and care. Understanding these challenges is crucial for parents and caregivers to provide the best possible start for their little ones.

#### Jaundice

Jaundice is a common occurrence in newborns, characterized by yellowing of the skin and eyes due to elevated bilirubin levels. While mild jaundice is often a normal part of the newborn period, severe cases may require intervention. Phototherapy, which involves exposing the baby to special lights, is a common treatment to help the body break down excess bilirubin.

#### Feeding difficulties

Establishing breastfeeding or bottle-feeding can be challenging for both the baby and the parents. Newborns may struggle with latching, and mothers may experience discomfort or uncertainty about whether their baby is getting enough milk. Lactation consultants and healthcare providers play a crucial role in offering support and guidance to address feeding difficulties and ensure the baby is receiving adequate nutrition.

#### Sleep pattern irregularities

Newborns are notorious for their irregular sleep patterns, which can be a source of concern for sleep-deprived parents. Understanding that newborns often wake frequently for feeding and comfort is essential. Establishing a consistent sleep routine, creating a conducive sleep environment, and seeking help from family or friends can aid in managing this common challenge.

#### Colic and excessive crying

Colic, characterized by excessive and inconsolable crying, is a common issue in the early months of life. While the exact cause of colic is not well understood, it is generally a self-limiting

condition. Parents can try various soothing techniques, such as gentle rocking, holding, or using white noise, to provide comfort to the baby.

#### Diaper rash

Diaper rash is a common skin condition that can cause redness and irritation in the diaper area. It is often a result of prolonged exposure to wetness and friction. Regular diaper changes, gentle cleansing, and the application of a diaper cream can help prevent and alleviate diaper rash.

#### Respiratory distress

Newborns may experience respiratory distress, which can manifest as rapid breathing, grunting, or nasal flaring. This may be due to transient conditions such as fluid in the lungs or immature respiratory systems. While some degree of respiratory distress is normal in the first hours after birth, persistent or severe symptoms require prompt medical attention.

#### Infections

Newborns are vulnerable to infections, and any signs of illness, such as fever, lethargy, or poor feeding, should be promptly addressed. Infections can occur during delivery or result from exposure to bacteria in the environment. Timely medical intervention, including the administration of antibiotics if necessary, is crucial for the well-being of the newborn.

#### Umbilical cord issues

The umbilical cord stump, which remains attached to the baby for the first few weeks, requires careful attention to prevent infection. Keeping the area clean and dry is essential, and parents should be alert to any signs of infection, such as redness, swelling, or discharge.

#### Congenital conditions

Some newborns may be born with congenital conditions that require medical attention. These conditions can range from heart defects to genetic disorders. Routine newborn screenings

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and thorough examinations by healthcare professionals help identify any congenital issues early, enabling timely intervention and management.

### **Weight gain concerns**

Monitoring the baby's weight gain is a crucial aspect of newborn care. Some infants may experience challenges with weight gain, and healthcare providers closely track growth patterns to ensure the baby is thriving. If there are concerns about inadequate weight gain, adjustments to feeding practices or medical evaluations may be necessary.

While the arrival of a term newborn is a time of immense joy, it is essential for parents and caregivers to be aware of the common challenges that may arise in the early days. Open communication with healthcare professionals, regular check-ups, and seeking support from experienced individuals, such as lactation consultants or pediatricians, can help address and manage these challenges effectively. By staying informed and proactive, parents can navigate the initial hurdles of newborn care with confidence, ensuring a healthy and happy start for their precious little ones.