

Five ways you can protect your baby

Skin to skin contact	Skin to skin contact protects your baby against infection as baby will be covered with good bacteria from your skin. This good bacteria transfers via breastmilk too, so skin to skin contact is even more important if mother is not breastfeeding to ensure baby receives this early protection. It also helps babies to adjust better to life outside the womb, it stimulates digestion, regulates temperature, breathing and heart-rate and relaxes both mother and baby.
Colostrum	Colostrum is the first milk that your body makes for your baby. It protects against infections and acts like your baby's first immunisation. Colostrum contains antibodies to develop your baby's immune system and Vitamin A which protects your baby's eyes. It is recommended that all babies receive colostrum either by breastfeeding, by expressing or colostrum harvested antenatally.
Hand washing	Infections are caused by bacteria or viruses. You can reduce the risk by washing your hands regularly for 20 seconds with soap and hot water, particularly if you have been changing nappies, or work with or care for small children. You can also reduce the risk by not sharing utensils.
Vaccines	Whooping cough is a serious infection which causes long bouts of coughing and breathlessness. If you are vaccinated in pregnancy (after 16 weeks gestation) the immunity you receive will be passed to your baby through your placenta. The RSV vaccine is offered from 28 weeks of pregnancy onwards to help protect against respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) which is a common cause of coughs and colds. These vaccines are highly effective at protecting your baby in their first few weeks of life prior routine immunisations at two months of age.
Vitamin K	Vitamin K helps blood to clot which reduces bleeding. Babies have low stores of Vitamin K which may put some babies at higher risk of bleeding. This is rare but can be serious. This can be prevented by giving your baby extra Vitamin K after birth. Ask your Midwife for more information.