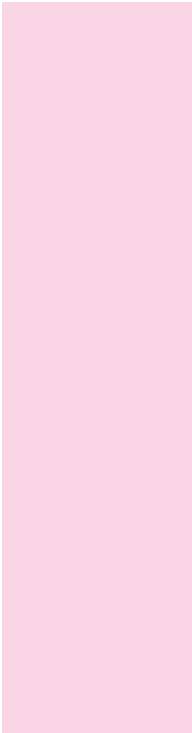


## **5 Conditions in infants that may cause parents to worry**



# Umbilical Hernia

## What is an umbilical hernia ?

An umbilical hernia is an abnormal bulge at the navel, commonly known as "debeso" (an "outtie"). Although the umbilical cord dries off after birth, the ring in the muscles of the abdominal wall underneath has not completely closed. This causes a part of the intestine to protrude from a weak spot in the wall and form a bulge at the navel.

A protrusion occurs when the infant is crying or straining but can easily be pushed back with gentle pressure.

An umbilical hernia is noticeable during the first 1-2 months and may become larger when the infant is 2-3 months old. Gradually the bulge becomes smaller as the abdominal muscles develop, and in most cases it corrects itself within the first year.

## Treatment

An umbilical hernia causes no problems to the infant's health and usually corrects itself naturally. If the umbilical hernia does not disappear within 12 months, a surgical procedure is advisable.

Surgery may be suggested if the hernia is quite large.

In the past, some people recommended placing a coin or taping adhesive plaster on the hernia. Be careful when doing this as it can lead to a skin rash or bacterial infection.

## Home Care

Crying does not make the hernia bigger. Crying is part of a normal childhood and helps in the development of abdominal muscles. Unlike other types of hernias, an umbilical hernia does not affect the bowels (incarceration).



## Constipation in Infants

Bowel movement patterns in infants vary. Constipation does not pose any problem if the infant is getting enough milk, is gaining weight constantly, and is passing soft-formed stools in bulk. It is a fact that when milk is digested and absorbed properly nothing is left as waste, and then constipation occurs.

### Treatment

Treatment for constipation is not necessary if the baby is getting enough milk and does not complain.

#### ① Milk

Make sure that the infant is breastfed or gets the right amount of milk for his age.

Irregular bowel movements pose no problem if the baby is gaining weight.

Changing the type of formula is sometimes helpful in easing constipation.

#### ② Cotton bud enema

If the infant has not passed stools for a week, the baby's abdomen can appear tight because it may be swollen with gas. The baby may feel discomfort and become irritable.

To help relieve discomfort, dampen a cotton bud with baby oil or olive oil and insert about 1 cm of the bud into the anus to stimulate and expel the gas.

#### ③ Releasing gas

If the cotton bud enema does not work and the infant is continuously in pain, you should seek medical attention. At the hospital, a thin tube will be inserted in the infant's anus to help induce a bowel movement.



## Uric Acid in Urine

Parents are surprised when they see an orange-colored residue of urine in a baby's diaper a few months after birth. This color indicates that the baby's urine contains deposits of urate crystal formation. An increased level of uric acid in the urine is particularly common during summer when excessive sweating gives rise to the concentration of urine.

Uric acid is the main cause of gout in adults. However, it causes no problems in infants. Treatment is not necessary if the baby is healthy.



## Thrush (Oral Candidiasis)

### What is thrush ?

Thrush is an illness caused by a type of fungus known as Candida.

This infection causes curd-like white patches on the mucous membrane inside the mouth, at the back of the lips and in the inner cheeks. Infection usually occurs when the infant has a cold or when his body resistance is low. It can also be acquired from unclean baby bottles or from sucking fingers and toys. Normally oral thrush doesn't show specific symptoms, but it gets to be painful once the patches spread all over the mouth. In this case, the infant will have difficulty feeding. Mothers' breasts are also prone to infection.

### Treatment

Pioctanin® (a purple ointment), syrup or topical medication is prescribed.

A mild candidiasis infection may resolve itself.

### Home Care

Make sure to keep feeding bottles and toys clean at all times.



## Neonatal Acne

### What is Neonatal Acne ?

This rash in babies appears during the first month of life and lasts up to 3 or 4 months. The rash appears as small red bumps that spread all over the face and sometimes to the chest. It is caused when the mother passes hormones on to the infant during pregnancy. This rash is like acne in adolescence.

### Medication and Home Care

As the hormones metabolize, the acne will disappear (usually within 3-4 months) Applying medication will not help. What is important is to keep the affected area clean until the acne clears up.

Infants are prone to developing different types of rashes at this age. Medication may be required at times.



## Epstein Pearl (Serres Epithelial Pearl)

### What is an Epstein pearl ?

An Epstein pearl is a white pearl-like nodule that appears on the gums just before the milk teeth come out. These nodules, elements in the teeth formation, were not absorbed and have hardened into a mass. One to two pearls, sometimes more, are formed. This condition is harmless and may disappear in a few months. Swallowing Epstein pearls causes no problem.



## Short Lingual Frenulum (Ankyloglossia)

### What is it ?

Short lingual frenulum or tongue-tie, as it is more commonly known, is an inborn condition in which the lingual frenulum is too short and hard restricting free movement of the tongue. When the child makes an attempt to stick out his tongue, there may be a heart shaped notch at the tip. Infants may have difficulty breastfeeding, and may have difficulty making certain sounds if the tongue is too short.

### Treatment

- ① Observation : As the child gets older, the tongue may reach its normal length.
- ② Surgical Treatment : If ankyloglossia causes feeding problems or effects speech, surgery may be required. However, surgery is not recommended during the first few months of life, as the problem may recur. In older children, there is the risk of profuse bleeding if clipping is done. In this case, general anesthesia should be administered.

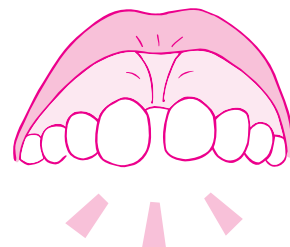
## Short Upper Lip Frenulum

### What is it ?

Short upper lip frenulum (the band at the back of the upper lip) is a condition in which the fibrous band in the upper lip is thicker and shorter than usual. In severe cases, the fibers pass between the two front teeth causing them to separate. Dirt may accumulate in this space, resulting in tooth decay or injury to the gums from brushing.

### Treatment

- ① Observation : Wait for the upper lip to develop as the infant grows.  
The condition may improve on its own in the case of a slight disorder.  
Also, spaces between incisors tend to correct themselves, so it is best to wait and see what develops.
- ② Surgical Treatment : Consult your physician if it becomes necessary to cut the frenulum.



## Color of Baby Stools (1)

### Yellow stools

The yellowish tinge in stools is caused by a substance called "bilirubin," which is also present in bile. This is a normal characteristic of stools.

In breastfed infants, white lumps are sometimes present in their stools. There should be no cause for concern, however, as these lumps are the substances from breast milk and milk formulas that normally contain fats and calcium.

### Brown stools

When solid foods or other liquids are introduced to an infant, the color of stools becomes brown, similar to those of adults.

The color of the stools varies from the different foods ingested, and from the intestinal bacteria (colon bacillus etc.) which is present in the intestines.

### Green stools

Green stools may be caused by pigmentation from "bilirubin" if the stools have remained inside the intestines for a long time, or as a result of oxidation after stools have been expelled and have undergone a chemical change due to exposure to the air. Another reason may be undigested green leafy vegetables (like spinach or broccoli).

### Black stools

From blood . . . . Blood that contains hemoglobin in red blood cells changes with stomach acidity.

- Bleeding in the upper part of the digestive tract located in the stomach or duodenum
- Swallowed blood from a nosebleed or bleeding around the mouth.

From food . . . .

- Foods which are hard to digest (nori, wakame, hijiki and other seaweed food products) are expelled out in stools undigested.
- Intake of food rich in iron

## Color of Baby Stools (2)

### White stools

White or gray-colored stools are signs of illness.

Other possible causes of white stools are the inability to breakdown fat substances and poor secretion of the digestive fluid (bile) because "bilirubin", the substance that gives color to the stools, has diminished.

- Diarrhea from rotavirus infection, clogged gallbladder, and others.

### Red stools

\* From food intake · · · Foods which are red in color (tomato, carrots, meat sauce, watermelon, etc.)

\* From medicines

\* Blood in stools

- Bleeding in the lower intestines or rectum

A small tear around the anus may stain the stools and the diaper.

- Intestinal infection

Bloody stools are caused by an inflammation of the lining of the intestines from an intestinal bacteria or virus. The symptoms are: loose bowels mixed with blood, a stomachache, vomiting and fever.

- Intussusception

This is a condition in which a segment of the intestine is obstructed and strangulated.

Consult a doctor immediately if the baby passes bloody currant jelly-like stools and vomiting persists.

0 to 5-month old babies (especially breast-fed) at times have blood mixed in their stools due to swelling of lymph nodes on the lining of the intestines. This results in the presence of streaks of blood in the stools. This condition will clear itself naturally over time.