

## Common Variations In The Newborn

**Swollen breasts and genitals:** Maternal hormones in the baby's system can cause this. Left alone the swelling will subside. Do not squeeze swollen breasts. Some baby girls may pass some "menstrual blood." This is normal.

**Asymmetry of the face:** The faces of newborn babies can be very lopsided because of molding that took place in the birth canal. This usually subsides in the first few days.

**Molding:** Your baby's skull may be extremely elongated as the bones of the skull overlap in order to fit through the birth canal. This usually subsides in the first few days.

**Caput:** A rounded, raised, cap-like swelling on the baby's head, consisting of fluid that is lying under the skin of the scalp. This usually subsides in the first few days.

**Cephalohematoma:** This looks very much like a caput, but consists of blood gathered under another layer of scalp tissue and has a bruised appearance. It may increase in size over the first few days. This can take several weeks to subside.

**Red, Bloodshot Eyes:** The whites of the baby's eyes may have red areas. These are broken blood capillaries; they are caused by the pressure of contractions on the baby's head during the second stage of labour.

**Umbilical Hernia:** The belly button may stick out all the time or only when the baby cries. This may be a hernia and is quite common in babies. Usually there is no treatment and it will heal itself in the first year of life.

**Milia:** These are tiny white pimples on the baby's nose or face, caused by vernix trapped in the pores of the skin. Do not pick! They will disappear in the first few weeks and require no action.

**Birthmarks:** These are small or large areas of pigmented skin. Most of these disappear in the first few days or months of life; however, some last a lifetime.

**Rashes:** These are very common in the newborn and usually cause no problem. The most common area for a rash to develop is around the genitals; if a "diaper rash" develops, leaving the diaper off to air the area will aid in healing. Applying barrier creams such as zinc cream can also help. Scented products and products with dyes should be avoided.

**Sucking Blisters:** It is very common for babies to develop blisters on their top lips from breastfeeding. These go away on their own and do not require any treatment.

**Startle or "Moro" Reflex:** In response to sudden movement or a loud noise the baby throws back its arms and looks very surprised; this reaction is often followed by a cry. This is a normal reflex and happens to all newborn babies.