

Baby's Cord Care

Once a baby is born, the umbilical cord is no longer needed. The cord stump will change color from yellow to brown or black and eventually fall off.

Caring for the area

Some doctors suggest swabbing the area with rubbing alcohol until the cord stump dries up and falls off, but others recommend leaving the area alone. Ask your child's doctor what he or she prefers.

When diapering your baby, roll the front of the diaper down so that it doesn't rub or irritate the umbilical cord.

An infant's navel area shouldn't be submerged in water until the cord stump falls off and the area is healed.

When to call the doctor

The cord stump will fall off on its own, usually in 10 days to three weeks after birth. Don't ever pull on the cord, even if it's partially attached. It will fall off when it's ready.

Consult your doctor if the navel area becomes reddened or if a foul odor or discharge develops. This could be a sign of infection.