

# Umbilical Cord Infection

## Bleeding

A few drops of blood at the point of separation of the cord is common. The area may bleed a few times from the friction of the diaper or your baby's normal movements.

The bleeding usually stops by itself or can be stopped easily by direct pressure with sterile gauze.

## Oozing

The umbilicus (navel) is oozing or moist or may even have some dried pus on the surface. Sometimes the cord has already fallen off, but more often it is still attached. Your baby probably has a mild infection of the navel from surface bacteria. It usually can be cleared up fairly quickly. Infection of the umbilicus must be treated with respect because of the risk of spread to the liver or the abdominal cavity.

Do not put talcum powder on the umbilicus; it can cause irritation and tissue reaction. Ointments should be avoided, because they delay drying and healing.

## Delayed Separation

Although most umbilical cords fall off between 10 and 14 days of age, an occasional cord may stay for 3 weeks or longer. Cords can also hang on by a strand of tissue for 2 or 3 days. Sometimes a scar known as a granuloma can hold on the cord. Delayed separation is not a medical problem. Eventually they all fall off so just be patient about it.

### Call Your Child's Physician Immediately If:

- Bleeding doesn't stop after 10 minutes of direct pressure.
- Any bleeding amounts to more than the size of a quarter.
- Red streaks develop on the normal skin surrounding the navel.
- Pimples or blisters appear around the navel.
- Your baby's rectal temperature is over 100.4 degrees F (38.0 degrees C) or under 97.5 degrees F (36.8 degrees C)
- Your baby acts sick.

### Call Your Child's Physician During Office Hours If:

- Bleeding continues for more than 3 days.
- You have other questions or concerns.