NEWBORN APPEARANCE

Babies are born with a distinct appearance. Many of their features will change over the next few months as they develop. Following are some of the unique characteristics of newborns.

Head:
- May have strange shape because of molding (especially after a vaginal delivery) and swelling of the scalp.
- This will return to a normal round appearance soon.
- There are soft spots (fontanels) which pulsate with the baby’s heartbeat.
- There are two - one is located on the top and one in the back.
- The larger one on the top usually closes by 10-14 months of age and the smaller one on the back will close within a couple of months.

Hair:
- Some babies have a lot of hair and some have hardly any at all.
- They may lose all of it during the first 6 months and then grow back with a different color.

Face:
- Often, the face is a bit swollen following delivery, wrinkled, and red.
- Milia (enlarged sebaceous glands, pimplelike) may be present for the first few weeks. DO NOT squeeze these as they will go away by themselves.
- The eyes are usually puffy and red after the medication is given (following delivery) and will clear after a couple of days.
- The color of the eyes is difficult to determine in a newborn. Many have grayish or brown-gray eyes, which will change to their permanent color at about 6 months of age.
- The ears are often flattened for awhile.
- The nose may be flattened and usually reshapes in about a week.

Skin:
- Newborns have smooth, puffy, pink and red skin.
- Many will develop a yellowed tone (jaundice) by the 3rd day.
- The skin will become dry and flaky.
- There are usually patches of fine hair (lanugo) on the earlobes, shoulders and upper back which disappears within a month or so.

Chest:
- Breasts may be enlarged on both boys and girls. This is normal and results from the hormones from the mother.
- There may be a drop of milk coming from the nipple and swelling for a couple of months.
- This will disappear by itself.
- The breasts are tender, so take care not to squeeze.

Genitals:
Females:
- Labia (folds of skin around the vaginal opening) may be enlarged and will decrease in size within 2-4 weeks.
- A vaginal discharge (pinkish, small amount) may be present.
Males:
- The testicles are swollen initially and will decrease in size within 2-4 weeks.
- Erections are normal.
- The testicles are usually in the scrotum, or they will descend shortly.

Umbilical cord:
- The remaining cord or umbilicus (belly button, navel) will usually fall off in about 10 days.

Contact your doctor if you have any other concerns regarding your newborn.