

Midwife's Assistant Resource Guide Care of the Newborn

The Steps for Performing a Newborn Exam

- **General Appearance:** Color, posture/tone, activity, size, maturity, and quality of cry.
- **Head:** Bruising, edema, molding/shape, sutures and fontanelles, caput, cephalhematoma
- **Neck:** Range of motion, asymmetry, masses, or crepitus.
- **Eyes:** Symmetry, shape/size, discharge, erythema, red light reflexes. erythema
- **Ears, Nose, Mouth:** Ear set/shape, preauricular pits/tags, nasal shape/patency, palate, gums, lips and tongue.
- **Thorax & Breasts:** Shape of thorax, position of nipples, work of breathing.
- **Lungs & Heart:** Breath sounds, heart murmur, femoral pulses.
- **Abdomen & Umbilicus:** Bowel sounds, liver, spleen, kidneys and umbilical cord.
- **Genitalia:** Labia, hymen or penis/testicles, and anus.
- **Trunk & Spine:** Symmetry, skin lesions, masses.
- **Extremities:** Mobility, deformity, stability.
- **Neurological:** Suck, grasp (hands/feet), moro reflex.

Source:

- <https://med.stanford.edu/newborns/clinical-rotations/students/students-newborn-exam.html#neurological>
- Davis, E. (2012). *Heart and Hands, Fifth Edition [2019]: A Midwife's Guide to Pregnancy and Birth* (Rev. ed.). Ten Speed Press.

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Important Things to Remember When Preparing for the Newborn Exam

- Due to blood-borne disease risks, wear gloves for the newborn exam unless baby had been intentionally cleaned of all of the birther's secretions.
- Make sure the room is warm that the exam will be performed in.
- Consider verbally explaining the entire exam so those around you can understand what you are doing and the parents can be reassured that their baby is receiving thorough care.
- Tools necessary to perform a newborn assessment: gloves, newborn scale, tape measure, stethoscope, receiving blankets, thermometer, possibly a ink pad for footprints.