Babies may feel unwell at one point or another. Knowing what the different baby problems and conditions are will help you ease your baby’s discomfort.
Here are some common problems or conditions that your baby may experience as he grows up. Here is a list of some baby’s problems and conditions and what you can do to help him.

**Common Infant Problems**

Your baby will experience coughs, colds, and other problems as part of the growing process. This is natural and helps him to build his immune system.

**Cough**

**What it is:** The sound of your baby coughing does not always mean that something is wrong. In fact, it is actually the body’s way of clearing bacteria, mucus and irritating substances from the airways.

**What to do:** Monitor and give him lots of rest and fluids. See a doctor if the baby’s cough makes him vomit or if he has difficulty breathing or if he also has a high fever.

**Bronchiolitis**

**What it is:** It is an infection of the small airways of the lungs. It causes wheezing (a high-pitched whistling sound when breathing out), and rapid or difficult breathing.

**What to do:** Offer your baby more fluids, as breastfeeding/suckling can be tiring especially if his nose is blocked. Avoid smoky places as tobacco smoke can make his condition worse. See a doctor, especially if his breathing is laboured and if he is lethargic, listless and refuses to eat.

**Constipation**

**What it is:** Constipation is not common among younger babies, especially breastfed ones. Some babies may not have bowel movements daily. It becomes a problem only when your baby’s bowel pattern slows down very much, his stools are harder than usual or if he shows visible discomfort, a hard abdomen, or becomes cranky.

**What to do:** Check with your doctor before trying anything to relieve your baby’s discomfort if he is constipated.
**Diarrhoea**

**What it is:** This is when your baby passes out smelly, watery, muscous-streaked stools. It is his body’s way of getting rid of an infection.

**What to do:** Give your baby lots of fluids to prevent dehydration. These are special fluids, electrolyte solutions, which are designed to replace water and salts lost during diarrhoea.

Consult your doctor, if you have any concern or if symptoms persist. See your doctor immediately if you detect any of these signs:

- Dehydration, especially when he passes very little urine and has fewer tears when crying.
- Sunken eyes.
- Dry skin, mouth and tongue.
- Sunken fontanelle (the soft spot on top of baby’s head, if he is younger than 18 months).
- Refuses to drink.
- Has passed six or more watery stools or vomited three or more times in a day or has green vomit.
- Has severe stomach pain.
- Is lethargic or irritable.
- Has cool hands and feet; feels clammy to the touch.
- Has shallow breathing and a fever.

**Colic**

**What it is:** If your baby cries more than three hours a day, at around the same time (usually late afternoon or evening) more than three days a week for more than three weeks, he probably has colic.

The crying is intense and it is extremely difficult to calm him down. He may clench his fists, tense his abdominal muscles and curl up his legs. Colic usually starts a few weeks after birth, peaks at 4 - 6 weeks and ends by the third month. The exact cause of colic is not known. Some possible contributing factors include excessive swallowing of air, milk allergy and an immature digestive system.

**What to do:** Comfort your baby by:

- Giving him small but frequent feeds, and burp him well.
- Cuddling him close to you, swaying or rocking him.
- Talking or singing softly to him.

It may cause a great deal of stress and worry for you when your baby has colic. These are some tips to help you cope with stress:

- If you are overwhelmed, feel helpless or depressed, confide in your husband, friends, family members or talk to other parents to find out what have worked for them and their babies.
- Do not panic, take a break from care giving by asking your husband or other family members for help.
- Know that this condition is temporary. Colic episodes usually ends by the third month.
Consult a doctor if you notice the following:
- Your baby does not stop crying, even after you have tried everything.
- Your baby takes in only half of the usual feeds or refuses to eat at all.
- You are worried and cannot cope.
- When you want to ensure that there is no medical cause for his discomfort.

Spit ups
What it is: It is normal for babies to spit up (throw up a small amount of milk) or to have a reflux. This happens when milk is thrown up. Spitting up is less forceful than vomiting.
What to do: Feed your baby in an upright position. Burp him frequently during and
There are some medical conditions your baby may experience. Always speak to your doctor for the best way to manage these conditions.

**G6PD Deficiency**

*What it is:* It is an inherited condition where the body has insufficient glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase (G6PD) enzymes. If your baby does not produce enough G6PD, the red blood cells can break down more easily and cause jaundice and anaemia. All newborns are screened for G6PD deficiency.

*What to do:* If your newborn is diagnosed with G6PD deficiency, talk to your doctor to understand more about this deficiency and the precautions to take for your baby.

**Heat Rash**

*What it is:* These are clear or red spots. They usually appear on the forehead, face, the folds of the neck, chest, and arms.

*What to do:* Avoid overdressing your baby. Dress your baby in cool, lightweight clothing in hot weather. Turn on the air-conditioner, fan or keep him in cool places. Heat rash will usually go away by itself.

after each feed to keep air from building up in his stomach. You could also try feeding him more often, but with less milk at each feed. See a doctor if your baby chokes, coughs, and seems to be in pain, or if the spit smells bad.

Use gentle, non-drying shampoo periodically when you wash your baby’s hair.”
Jaundice
What it is: When the baby’s skin and the whites of his eyes look yellowish, he probably has jaundice. It is caused by too much bilirubin in the blood. Jaundice is common in babies for the first 3 weeks of life. But it can get serious and even life-threatening if it is not treated properly.
What to do: Bring your baby to the doctor for a check up. If his jaundice levels are too high, he may need to stay in the hospital. The usual treatment is phototherapy, where your baby is placed under blue light. Babies with jaundice are usually sleepy and have to be woken to feed.

Club Foot
What it is: Due to your baby’s position in the womb, he may point his feet downwards and inwards. This is diagnosed during a newborn’s physical examination. The problem is not painful but it can interfere with walking if not corrected.
What to do: Consult your doctor who may recommend physical therapy. More serious cases may need to be treated with corrective shoes or surgery.

Cradle Cap
What it is: Greasy, crusty, scaly patches on the baby’s scalp. It will usually disappear by itself after a few months.
What to do: Use gentle, non-drying shampoo periodically when you wash your baby’s hair. You can also apply a layer of olive oil and leave it on for a few hours to loosen the scales so that they wash off more easily or be brushed off with a soft baby brush. If the cradle cap seems to be increasing instead of lessening, your baby’s doctor may recommend a medicated shampoo or a lotion.

Eczema
What it is: These are light red or tan-pink patches of rough scaly skin that turns red later. It could be caused by a change in your baby’s formula milk, laundry detergent, a strong soap, certain fabrics or even if the weather is too hot.
What to do: Check your home for things that could have irritated your baby’s delicate skin. Try not to expose him to extreme temperatures (too hot or too cold). If the condition does not improve, seek a doctor’s advice as your baby may need medication.

Yeast Infection
What it is: It looks like a bright red rash, usually in the diaper region or where the skin folds are. It is caused by microorganisms that flourish in a warm, moist environment.
What to do: See the doctor. Your baby will need prescription medicine to clear it.