



# Care of the Well Term Neonate Position Statement

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COINN (Council of International Neonatal Nurses, Inc) acknowledges that limited resources and/or personnel may restrict opportunities to implement the recommendations and action points. To improve health outcomes, the global neonatal care community must strive to uphold these recommendations. This position statement is applicable to any healthcare professional caring for the well term infant and their families.

## **SUMMARY**

The Council of International Neonatal Nurses (COINN) is the international voice of neonatal nurses who provide care during this vulnerable period. To address identified gaps in current practice COINN supports and recommends the following basic care for the well term infant.

## **BACKGROUND AND FACTORS**

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 calls for a reduction in newborn death to <12 deaths per 1000 births (United Nations, 2023a). The worldwide neonatal mortality rate fell by 51 per cent from 37 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 18 in 2021. This amounts to approximately 2.3 million neonates who died in the first 28 days of life in 2021 globally, or approximately 6 400 per day (UNICEF, 2023a).

Disparities in neonatal mortality are still present across regions and countries, amidst the declining overall neonatal mortality rate. The region with the highest mortality rate remains sub-Saharan Africa (i.e., West, Central, Eastern and Southern Africa regions) and South Asia, with respectively 27 and 23 deaths per 1000 live births (UNICEF, 2023a).

Although progress has been made over the past decade, still too many neonates are dying when preventative measures are possible. The purpose of Every Newborn Action Plan (ENAP) is to provide countries with a roadmap to reduce preventable newborn deaths and stillbirths, and to reduce disability by 2030. One of the strategies is for every woman and newborn to receive early routine postnatal care within 2 days (UNICEF, 2023b). The World Health Organization (2017) published recommendations for neonatal health, including the care of the newborn immediately after birth, postnatal care, immunization, and management of illnesses.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) 8<sup>th</sup> edition Guidelines for Perinatal Care recommend careful observation of a newborn during the first 6-12 hours of the transition period (AAP & ACOG, 2017).

COINN's recommendations and action points for the care of the well term neonate are drawing from the above sources and additional evidence-based information. It is important to also take note of the position statement and recommendations related to preterm and sick neonates.

## **COINN RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION POINTS:**

1. At every delivery a healthcare professional skilled in neonatal resuscitation should be present and be dedicated solely to care for the neonate.
2. Essential care of the newborn (WHO, 2023) should be implemented and entails the following:
  - Immediate care at birth includes delayed/optimal cord clamping, thorough drying, assessment of breathing, skin-to-skin contact, and early initiation of breastfeeding
  - Thermal care
  - Resuscitation when needed
  - Support for breast milk feeding
  - Nurturing care
  - Infection prevention
  - Assessment of health problems
  - Recognition and response to danger signs
  - Timely and safe referral when needed.
3. Routine care should include prophylactic administration of Vitamin K and eye prophylaxis against gonococcal ophthalmia as recommended by local policies.
4. Bathing, skin care and cord care should be done according to evidence-informed guidelines.
5. The neonate must be screened and immunized according to the country's requirements.
6. Each neonate should be admitted as an individual patient including the establishment of an individual record to document the neonate's condition, progress and all actions taken.
7. Neonates should meet the discharge criteria prior to leaving the facility.
8. Breastfeeding initiation, attachment and bonding should be facilitated.
9. Refer to the position statement on sleep for neonates.

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