



Γιατροί του Κόσμου
Όπου υπάρχουν άνθρωποι...

Μητέρα & παιδί



MSD for mothers

Infant Care

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Introduction

- ▶ The arrival of a new baby at home is always anticipated with great joy and impatience.
- ▶ Nature has endowed all mothers with a maternal instinct that makes them capable of fulfilling the duties of their new role.
- ▶ The following tips will help new mothers handle the baby's adjustment at home easily and contentedly.



Crying

- ▶ Crying is the only means available to babies to express their needs and feelings.
- ▶ As days go by, parents begin to better understand the reasons why a baby is crying -hunger, pain, illness, soiled diaper, cold or heat, or the need for a hug- and respond accordingly.



Navel care

- ▶ The stump, that is the part of the umbilical cord left on the baby's belly, remains in place for one to two weeks after birth and then falls off.
- ▶ Throughout this period and for a few days afterwards, the navel needs to be looked after in order to prevent infection.
- ▶ Clean the navel using cotton or gauze dipped in pure alcohol. Perform this procedure three to four times a day and continue for four to five days after the stump has fallen off.



Navel care

- ▶ To avoid navel irritation and further issues related to infections, make sure that the area is kept dry at all times and is not covered by the diaper.
- ▶ During the first few weeks, you have to be particularly careful with the way you wash the baby. Carefully rest it against your arm and wash it in the bathroom sink without immersing it in water. There is no need to worry if running water drips on the navel.
- ▶ If redness, warmth, swelling or foul smell is observed, you must inform the paediatrician.



Diaper change

- ▶ A clean baby is a happy baby. If it does not feel dry and clean, it will let us know through crying. Especially at first, when the baby's bowel movements are quite frequent (ranging from 1 to 7 bowel movements and 8 to 20 urinations per day for breastfed babies), diaper changes also have to be frequent to prevent diaper rash. A diaper change should take place before each meal.
- ▶ Frequent diaper changes may seem difficult at first, but you will soon realize how simple this process is.



Diaper change

- ▶ You can easily perform a diaper change on any surface on which you have previously spread out a soft and waterproof cover.
- ▶ You should always remain close to the baby throughout this process and make sure that you have everything you need within reach before you start.
- ▶ Always wash your hands before a diaper change. Unfasten the tapes of the soiled diaper and stick them to the back of the diaper so that they do not stick on the baby's skin. Before removing the diaper, hold the baby from the legs and lift it up.



Diaper change

- ▶ Fold the soiled diaper and make sure you hold the baby very carefully to wash it locally with running water.
- ▶ If you have a baby girl, make sure to wash the area from front to back to avoid vaginal infections.
- ▶ Gently wipe and apply cream only when needed. It is advisable to avoid using cream every time you change a diaper, to allow the baby's skin to breathe.



Diaper change

- ▶ Put on a clean diaper and fasten the tapes.
- ▶ The diaper should not be too tight to avoid irritation of the baby's skin.
- ▶ If the stump has not yet fallen off, make sure to not cover the area by folding the top of the diaper outwards.
- ▶ Then dress your baby and wash your hands again.



Facial care - ears

- ▶ After a bath, you should always dry your baby's ears externally with a towel.
- ▶ Never use cotton swabs to clean a baby's ears. The use of cotton swabs presents the risk of injuring the tympanic membrane (eardrum). In addition, the natural shield provided by earwax is destroyed, leaving the baby prone to infections.



Facial care - nose

- ▶ Most babies produce plenty of nasal mucus after birth, which has to be removed. You can tell there is mucus present if you hear the baby snuffling, especially when it is asleep or eating.
- ▶ Use saline ampoules to clear away the mucus: lay the baby on one side and squeeze the ampoule to release 2 to 2.5 ml of its content inside the nostril. Then turn the baby on the other side and repeat the procedure in the other nostril.



Facial care - nose

- ▶ It is important to clean the baby's nose before meals so that it can eat better and enjoy a calmer sleep afterwards.
- ▶ You do not have to do this before every meal, only if a blockage is detected. In this case, do not hesitate to repeat the procedure with the ampoule as many times as needed.
- ▶ Once the saline has been infused, hold the baby in a burping position to calm it down and help it expel the mucus that blocks its breathing.
- ▶ Avoid performing this procedure right after a meal as it may cause vomiting.



Facial care - eyes

- ▶ If your baby has eye discharge, drip some saline into its eye while holding the head steady by the neck with your other hand. Then wipe the eye with a piece of, preferably sterilized, gauze.
- ▶ Once you have finished with one eye, clean the other one using a new piece of gauze.



Proper temperature

- ▶ When our baby is dressed, room temperature should be around 20-22° C (68-71.6° F).
- ▶ When the baby is naked, the temperature should be around 30° C (86° F) for full-term babies and higher for premature ones.
- ▶ Make sure that the baby's room is often ventilated to renew the oxygen in the air.



Nail clipping

- ▶ Experts say that we should not clip the baby's nails before the end of its first month
- ▶ At this early stage, its nails are so soft that you can even remove any unnecessary parts just by softly and very carefully pulling them with your hand.
- ▶ To prevent the baby from scratching itself, you can simply smooth the tips of the nails with a very soft file. If you notice that your baby's nails have grown hard enough, you can clip them with somebody else's help or follow the method used by many parents: catch them while asleep.



Nail clipping

- ▶ If your baby does not wake up easily, you can clip its nails while asleep.
- ▶ It is also easy to clip them right after a bath, when the nails are soft enough.
- ▶ You should always use a special pair of scissors with rounded tips or a special nail clipper for babies. For greater convenience and safety, hold the baby's palm in one hand and clip the nails with the other.
- ▶ Gently press the skin under the nail to avoid accidentally hurting your baby in case of a wrong movement.



Nail clipping

- ▶ Do not forget to round the corners of the baby's nails to avoid scratches.
- ▶ Do not panic if you slightly hurt one of the baby's fingers by mistake.
- ▶ Apply some Betadine solution locally. From babyhood to infancy, children's nails grow very fast.
- ▶ You may need to groom them as often as once or twice a week to keep the child from scratching its face, as well as for hygiene reasons.



Infant bath

- ▶ Although your newborn baby's first bath may seem scary, it is not that difficult since the baby is small and light.
- ▶ It is a very short process especially during the first few weeks, as the baby has a tiny body and little to no hair.
- ▶ To ensure the infant's safety, you should never leave it alone in the bathroom. Make sure you have everything you need close at hand.
- ▶ At first, all you will need for its bath is a special baby soap and a towel or bathrobe.



Infant bath

- ▶ One of the baby care products you will need is a special moisturising cream or lotion for babies, which should be used only in case you notice that the baby's skin is dehydrated after the bath. You should also have a special diaper rash cream to treat any irritation in the baby's genitals.



Infant bath

- ▶ You should preferably use almond oil for the moisturisation of newborn babies.
- ▶ During the bath, put the baby in the sink or bathtub and hold it steady.
- ▶ Its head should be resting on your arm while you support the rest of the body with your forearm and hold its bottom in your palm.
- ▶ Never hold the baby under the tap; wash it by taking water in your hand instead, so that you are able to check the water temperature, which may change suddenly for some reason (e.g. if someone else in the house turns on another tap).



Infant bath

- ▶ Bathing water does not need to be very hot. Its temperature should range between 36 and 38° C (96.8-100.4° F). You should always test the temperature on the inner part of your wrist, until it feels slightly warm.
- ▶ Gently soap up the baby's body, moving from top to bottom.
- ▶ Avoid using sponges, as they can carry a lot of germs.
- ▶ Rinse and carefully pat the baby dry, paying particular attention to skin folds.



Infant hiccups

- ▶ Hiccups can first appear in embryos as early as the third month of pregnancy. It is a very common phenomenon in infants, especially after meals, as their diaphragm is not yet fully formed.
- ▶ What you can do if your baby gets the hiccups is change its position or stroke its back to calm it down. If your baby gets the hiccups during a meal, proceed as above and resume feeding once the hiccups are over.



Sneezing in infants

- ▶ During the first three months of a baby's life, sneezing occurs more frequently and is considered normal.
- ▶ It is a sign of illness only when accompanied by other symptoms as well, such as cough or fever.



Spitting up

- ▶ Spitting up, which occurs more often when the baby burps, refers to the expulsion of a small quantity of milk through the baby's mouth.
- ▶ This, too, is a very common phenomenon in infants, due to the immaturity of their digestive system, and should not be confused with vomiting.



Pseudo-menstruation

- ▶ Pseudo-menstruation sometimes appears in baby girls.
- ▶ During the first 3 to 5 days of a newborn girl's life, you may notice a bloody discharge from the vagina.
- ▶ This minimal blood flow, caused by the mother's hormones that pass through the placenta to the newborn girl, subsides within a few days.
- ▶ In any case, since parents cannot tell where this fluid comes from, they should always consult a paediatrician.



Strabismus

- ▶ Strabismus (misaligned eyes) is a normal phenomenon in the first months of a baby's life and up to the age of one year.
- ▶ The baby will have to be checked by an eye doctor only in case strabismus persists after 3 months.



Colic

- ▶ One of the most common problems parents face in the first few weeks of a baby's life is colic.
- ▶ Infantile colic is not an illness. It is a temporary disorder affecting 30% of babies.
- ▶ Although only 1 in 20 babies experiences serious episodes of colic, it only makes sense to be greatly concerned when it comes to our own baby. The causes of infantile colic are not clear. It occurs both in breastfed children and in children who receive a formula-based nutrition.



Colic

- ▶ There are many theories regarding the causes of colic, but none of them has been proved.
- ▶ One of these theories suggests that colic is caused by air swallowed during meals. If the baby does not burp after a meal, its belly fills with air and swells, causing pain.
- ▶ Another cause of colic is the immaturity of the baby's intestine and, more particularly, the gut flora. This immaturity hinders the digestion of certain milk components such as lactose, which is a carbohydrate. Furthermore, the intestine works very hard to expel the stool from the baby's body, causing cramps.



Colic

- ▶ Colic usually occurs around the second to third week of the baby's life.
- ▶ Its duration varies throughout the day; likewise, the baby's tolerance to pain is not the same at all times.
- ▶ Episodes can last from a few minutes to several hours, with intervals of calm which vary in duration.
- ▶ Colic peaks at 1.5 to 2 months and begins to subside at 2.5 months, until it disappears for good at 3 to 4 months.



Colic symptoms

- ▶ The baby cries for at least 3 hours a day or for more than 3 days a week.
- ▶ Colic episodes usually occur late in the afternoon or at night.
- ▶ The baby usually cries, draws up its legs against its belly or stretches them out.
- ▶ The baby's stomach feels tight and may rumble, while the baby often refuses to eat.



Helping babies with colic

- ▶ Hold the baby upright in your arms with its legs drawn up to its belly.
- ▶ Play some soft music while holding the baby in your arms or when you leave it in its room.
- ▶ Lay the baby on its stomach in your lap and rub its back.
- ▶ Try a warm bath or placing warm pads on the baby's belly for a few minutes. Massaging with warm oil and placing a warm towel over its belly could also be quite helpful.



Helping babies with colic

- ▶ Take the baby for a stroll in its pushchair or even better for a ride in the car.
- ▶ The baby may be distracted with a relaxed car ride or find relief in the gentle rocking motion and fall asleep.
- ▶ If there is a constipation problem and the baby has not had a bowel movement in 3 days or more, glycerine suppositories or baby enemas might be of help.



Helping babies with colic

- ▶ Before applying any of the above, other potential problems should be excluded, such as hunger, the need for a diaper change, cold or excessive heat.
- ▶ Furthermore, if you have any concerns or believe that there might be another problem as well, you should contact your midwife or paediatrician.



Remember:

- ▶ Many parents mistakenly believe that their baby may find comfort in drinking more milk. Overfeeding, combined with the overabundance of stimuli, such as movement, voices, tension, stress, and unrest in the family environment, are factors which aggravate the colic.



Remember:

- ▶ Delegating the care of the baby to someone else, even for just a short while, especially if you feel on the verge of mental and physical exhaustion, does not mean you are not a good mother.
- ▶ A third person who has patience and experience in baby care can be an invaluable ally in the battle against colic.



Baby sleep

- ▶ A newborn usually sleeps for a total of 14 to 18 hours daily. This sleep is not continuous.
- ▶ Lay the baby/infant on its back or side (using pillows as wedges) -NEVER ON ITS BELLY- until it reaches an age when it is able to roll over from back to belly and vice versa on its own. This is to avoid the chance of sudden infant death.
- ▶ A newborn baby wakes up every few hours because it is hungry.
- ▶ Its stomach is still too small and the amount of milk it can take is not enough to keep the baby asleep for many hours, as its rapid development makes its metabolism run at full speed.
- ▶ Newborns usually wake up every 2 to 3 hours to eat, while breastfed babies wake up even more often.



Baby sleep

- ▶ In case your newborn has not eaten because it has been sleeping for more than 4 hours during the day and 5 hours during the night, it is advisable to gently wake it and feed it, as well as change its diaper to avoid rashes.
- ▶ After around 2 to 3 months, there is an improvement regarding how often the baby wakes up.
- ▶ Over time, you will notice that the number of sleeping hours, as well as the times when the baby wakes up because of hunger, are becoming more and more stable.



Baby sleep

- ▶ As your baby grows, it will gradually start sleeping longer hours. Bear in mind that every baby is unique, and sleep patterns vary from one baby to the next.
- ▶ You will notice that your baby does not distinguish between daytime and night-time hours, and that the sleep - feeding - diaper change - sleep cycle is more or less the same throughout the day and night. You can, however, help it gradually become aware of the day/night cycle.



Baby sleep

- ▶ When it sleeps during the day, it helps if you keep the shutters open and the baby's surroundings are relatively quiet, though not as completely silent as during the night.
- ▶ At night, make sure that it sleeps in silence without light. For night-time feeding and diaper changes, light up a faint light that only just allows you to see and take care of the baby without stimulating it with much talking and toys.
- ▶ It is also preferable for the baby to take its bath in the evening, at around the same time every day, before eating and sleeping.



Remember:

- ▶ Since the first weeks of the baby's life are particularly demanding and new mums will have to wake up frequently during the nights, make sure to save energy. Take care only of what is absolutely necessary and get help for the cooking and housework or for any other obligations you may have.
- ▶ The father's active involvement in the care and upbringing of a child is also important. A father can do everything the mother does, except of course breastfeeding.
- ▶ Even during the day, it is important to take advantage of the time when your baby is asleep to sleep yourself, as it is the only chance you will get to make up for the hours of lost sleep.



Remember:

- ▶ Place your newborn baby's bassinet or cradle in your bedroom or next to you. This will help you keep an eye on the baby and make it easier to feed it at night.
- ▶ When your baby wakes up crying, do not take it in your arms right away. Try gently touching it with your hand first, to make it feel secure.
- ▶ It is better to avoid using a pacifier during the first month, while pacifiers should not be used at all in breastfed babies.



Baby clothing

- ▶ At this early stage, babies do not need to wear special clothes for sleeping. Breathable cotton clothing is the ideal solution.
- ▶ Cover your baby according to the season, with a bed linen in the summer or a blanket in the winter, always leaving the head uncovered.
- ▶ Babies feel the environmental temperature the same way we do –they are not more sensitive to cold–, so there is no need to overdress them during the winter.



Diarrhoea in infants & toddlers

Causes of diarrhoea:

- ▶ There is a distinction between infectious and non-infectious causes.
- ▶ Infectious diarrhoea is caused by various viruses or germs, e.g. food poisoning. Breastfed newborns may often have as many as 10 bowel movements per day. This is a normal phenomenon that does not require treatment.
- ▶ Another cause of diarrhoea may be the child's sensitivity to lactose, which is the main sugar found in milk, or an allergy to milk albumin. In slightly older children, diarrhoea sometimes occurs after excessive consumption of sugary juices, nuts, etc.



Diarrhoea in infants & toddlers

Consequences:

- ▶ Mild diarrhoea does not cause problems.
- ▶ Acute diarrhoea, however, can lead to severe loss of body fluids and result in dehydration.
- ▶ This manifests as the passing of a limited volume of dark urine, mouth dryness, sunken eyes that do not produce tears, dry skin, and weight loss.

Treatment:

- ▶ It depends on the child's age.



Diarrhoea in infants & toddlers

If the child is less than 2 years old:

- ▶ If it is fed formula milk, then this should be diluted to half its normal concentration (i.e., use twice as much water as you normally do).
- ▶ If the child eats solid foods as well, then cut these out of its diet; instead, feed it apple, banana, or carrot pulp and boiled rice for 48 hours. Then gradually revert to its regular diet.
- ▶ If the child is breastfed, never stop breastfeeding; instead, give the child water to drink in between feeding sessions.
- ▶ If the child develops acute diarrhoea (one or more bowel movements per hour), stop feeding it milk altogether for 24 hours and replace it with a ready-made electrolyte solution dissolved according to the manufacturer's instructions.



Diarrhoea in infants & toddlers

You should become concerned:

- ▶ If the child has more than 10 bowel movements a day.
- ▶ If diarrhoea is accompanied by vomiting.
- ▶ If diarrhoea is accompanied by abdominal pain which lasts longer than 2 hours.
- ▶ If the child is dehydrated (as mentioned above).
- ▶ If there is blood in the stool.
- ▶ If diarrhoea lasts more than a week.

Prevention of diarrhoea

- ▶ Thorough washing of hands with soap and water after every bowel movement and every diaper change.
- ▶ Thorough washing of vegetables and fruits, thorough cooking of meat and eggs.



Constipation

Definition:

- ▶ First of all, we should clarify what we mean by constipation.
- ▶ Constipation exists when the child's bowel movements are painful, when the child wants to but cannot pass stool, when the stools are hard, or when the child has not had a bowel movement in more than 4 days.
- ▶ It should be stressed, however, that the bowel movements of breastfed infants may be even less frequent, i.e. every 5-6 days, without causing any discomfort. Therefore, constipation for a breastfed baby means 7 days without a bowel movement.

Treatment:

- ▶ For infants aged over 6 months: Give plenty of fruits and greens. These are better eaten raw and unpeeled. Plums, figs, grapes, peaches, apricots, celery, cucumbers, lettuce, and cabbage are all recommended in this case.



Constipation

- ▶ If the child is less than 6 months old, give it orange juice or the juice of boiled plums to drink (5-6 teaspoons, 2-3 times a day).
- ▶ Give the child black bread and cereals to eat, or add bran in its orange juice or meal (1/2 teaspoon each time). Feed it honey (if the child is over 1 year old).
- ▶ Limit the consumption of foods that cause constipation, such as milk, rice, apples, bananas, carrots.
- ▶ Give the child more water to drink and make it sit on the toilet twice a day after meals.



Constipation

- ▶ In acute cases where the child has difficulty passing stool, placing it in a basin of lukewarm water could help.
- ▶ You can also remove any troublesome hard stools with a gloved finger coated with petroleum jelly.
- ▶ Then, give the child a salt enema as follows: add 2 level teaspoons of salt to 4 tall glasses of lukewarm water.
- ▶ Perform an enema with this mixture using the following quantities: 1-year-old child - ½ tall glass.
- ▶ During the enema, the tip of the tube entering the anus should be coated with petroleum jelly and then inserted into the rectum at a depth of about 4 cm.
- ▶ The bottle containing the solution must be at a height not exceeding 60 cm.



Constipation

- ▶ If medication is necessary, the child should be given $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon of fibre in 1 glass of water, and 2.5 ml lactulose twice a day for children aged less than 1 year or 5 ml for older children.
- ▶ The dose is progressively increased until the medicine takes effect.
- ▶ If constipation persists, consult your doctor.

Prevention

- ▶ Drinking plenty of water daily.
- ▶ Avoiding the consumption of large amounts of milk.
- ▶ Daily consumption of raw vegetables and fruits.



Fever

Definition:

- ▶ Normal body temperature ranges from 36.6 to 37.2° C (97.9-99° F).
- ▶ Body temperature is not stable; especially in children, it fluctuates throughout the day, ranging from 36.1 to 38° C (97-100.4° F).
- ▶ Therefore, it is lower in the morning and higher by 1° C (1.8° F) in the afternoon.
- ▶ It also rises after intense exercise and hot meals and during digestion.
- ▶ Temperature also varies depending on which part of the body is measured. Therefore, temperature in the armpit is about 2° C (3.6° F) lower than in the rectum.
- ▶ Fever is defined as a rectal temperature exceeding 38° C (100.4° F), an oral temperature exceeding 37.8° C (100° F), or an armpit temperature exceeding 37.2° C (99° F).



Causes of fever

- ▶ Fever is not always caused by an infection. For example, the most common cause of fever in newborns is overheating due to excessive clothing (muffling) or inadequate fluid intake.
- ▶ Infection-triggered fever is part of a defence mechanism trying to protect the body against germs or viruses.
- ▶ Contrary to what is wrongly believed, fever itself is not harmful to the body unless it exceeds 41.7° C (107° F).
- ▶ Therefore, it is not absolutely necessary to use antipyretics unless:
 - ▶ Body temperature exceeds 39° C (102.2° F).
 - ▶ The child is greatly distressed by the fever, e.g. it has headaches or cannot sleep.
 - ▶ The child has a chronic health problem, e.g. a heart or respiratory condition.
 - ▶ The child suffers from febrile convulsions.



How to measure temperature

- ▶ An infant's body temperature is measured through the rectum.
- ▶ Lay the infant face down on your lap, lubricate the tip of the thermometer, insert it into the rectum at a depth of 2 cm, and leave it there for 3 minutes while pressing the buttocks together.
- ▶ In older children, body temperature is measured in the armpit, by placing the arm along the side of the body and holding it in place over the thermometer for 3 minutes.
- ▶ Oral measurement is also possible, after you make sure that the child has not drunk anything hot or cold for a while.
- ▶ Ask the child to breathe through the nose during measurement.
- ▶ Modern electronic thermometers are equally fast and accurate.



Proper treatment

- ▶ In the vast majority of children, fever is caused by viral infections and, as it is well-known, viruses do not respond to antibiotics. It is therefore a mistake to administer antibiotics in every case of fever without consulting a doctor. In any case, a diagnosis should only be provided by a paediatrician.
- ▶ Proper treatment involves removing some of the child's clothes (excessive clothing not only does nothing towards a faster recovery, but also prevents the fever from subsiding).
- ▶ Wipe the child's face and limbs with a wet sponge or bathe the child at 37° C (98.6° F). More specifically, fill the bathtub with only 10 cm of lukewarm water (30-32° C / 86-89.6° F).
- ▶ Put the child in the bathtub and wipe it with a sponge for 30 minutes. To increase the effectiveness of the bath, give the child an antipyretic first.
- ▶ The medicine should be given at least 30 minutes before the bath. Administration of the drug can be repeated every 6 hours.



You should become concerned:

- ▶ If the child is less than 2 months old
- ▶ If fever exceeds 40.5° C (104.9° F)
- ▶ If the child does not wake up easily, or appears confused
- ▶ If the child suffers from convulsions
- ▶ If the child has red spots on the skin
- ▶ If the child has difficulty bending its head forward
- ▶ If the child has difficulty breathing



Cold

- ▶ The so-called cold is in fact a viral infection caused by several viruses.
- ▶ It is not uncommon for young children under the age of 3 years to catch 6-7 colds a year, especially during winter months.
- ▶ There are even kids who are perfectly healthy in all other respects and go through a viral infection every month or so.
- ▶ The number of viral infections decreases after the age of 3, as the immune system gradually matures.
- ▶ Children who start attending nursery school at an early age have 50% more viral infections than children that start later.
- ▶ These cold-inducing viruses are transmitted either through droplets released from a patient's mouth with cough, or via the hands coming into direct contact with mucus from the patient's nose.
- ▶ Symptoms are easily recognizable –runny nose, cough, sore throat– and appear about 3 days after contact with a sick person. Symptoms usually last up to 7 days.



Treatment

- ▶ Since colds are induced by viruses, it is a big mistake to administer antibiotics, which have no effect on viruses.
- ▶ The indicated treatment aims at relieving the symptoms of fever, cough, runny nose and sore throat.
- ▶ That is why it involves antipyretics, hot beverages such as chicken soup and chamomile, and nasal saline drops several times a day.
- ▶ Honey helps suppress the cough and throat soreness.



You should become concerned:

- ▶ If the fever lasts more than 2/3 days, to prevent other potential serious diagnoses such as otitis, tonsillitis, pneumonia, or urinary tract infections from going undetected. Of course, if the child has a fever exceeding 38.5° C (101.3° F) and appears lethargic, it must be assessed shortly after the onset of fever.
- ▶ If a runny nose or cough persists for more than 10 days.
- ▶ If the child experiences pain in the ear or face.
- ▶ If the child breathes rapidly or has difficulty breathing.

In these cases you should contact your doctor!



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