

Abnormal Umbilicus

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The mother of this newborn infant is concerned that the umbilicus of the infant looks abnormal. The umbilical protrusion does not increase in size when the infant cries or strains. There is no bleeding or fecal discharge from the umbilicus. The infant is asymptomatic.

What is your diagnosis?

To produce a normal navel, the skin of the abdominal wall joins the umbilical cord at the level of the abdomen. When the cord sloughs, only a small amount of skin at the base remains, and a normal umbilical cicatrix is formed. Umbilicus cutis results when the skin in the peri-umbilical area extends up the sides of the umbilical cord, forming an outpouching after the umbilical cord falls off. It is a harmless anomaly and is asymptomatic.

Umbilicus cutis must be differentiated from an umbilical hernia by the lack of fascial defect and by the fact that there is no further protrusion when the infant cries or strains. An omphalocele is a congenital anomaly of the anterior abdominal wall in which the abdominal viscera herniates through a central defect at the site of the umbilical ring. An omphalocele presents as an umbilical mass covered by a translucent membrane.



Figure 1: Abnormal Umbilicus

For umbilicus cutis, no treatment is necessary except for cosmetic purposes. If this is the case, plastic surgery should be considered.

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