



## **Newborn Session Preparation Guide**

### **AFTER DELIVERY/SCHEDULE THE DATE**

From this newborn photography prep guide the most important step you can take when it comes to taking portraits of your newborn baby is scheduling a time to do so. Call or text Jessica Wilson Photography as soon as you can to book your session. Having a newborn places many new demands on your schedule, however it is important to understand that your baby will change daily during the first few weeks of life. This is why it is so important to schedule your appointment as soon as possible. Photographing newborns within the first seven days offers the ability to take advantage of your baby's natural sleep patterns.

During the first week of life, babies sleep more and are therefore more cooperative for a photography session. They are more easily posed and enjoy curling up. After seven days, babies begin to become more aware and enjoy stretching out, making it more difficult to get some of the more signature newborn poses and this is the time when colic can set in, making for a very fussy baby. This is why it is imperative to have your baby photographed as soon as possible. Not only will the session be shorter, you will be able to select from many more beautiful poses.

### **SCHEDULE THE TIME OF THE SESSION**

Ideally; your baby should be sleeping while being photographed in order to allow me the opportunity to create beautiful poses without resistance. Having a sleeping baby also means that he or she won't be crying during the session. Try to keep track of your new baby's sleep/wake schedule and try to schedule your session for a sleep cycle.

### **BREASTFEEDING MOMS**

Starting 48 hours prior to the session it is important to follow the breastfeeding guide that eliminates foods and drinks that are likely to cause upset tummies for babies. Not only does this help to prevent unnecessary spitting up, but it also reduces gas, diarrhea, and stomach discomfort, which can cause an unhappy baby. If baby happens to be gassy the day of your session, Oval or Gripe Water can be used to help ease baby's discomfort.

### **10-12 HOURS PRIOR TO SESSION**

In the hours leading up to your session, it is very important to feed your baby as frequently as possible to ensure his or her tummy is full. This will not only keep your baby from being fussy due to being hungry, but will also allow him or her to enjoy a long, peaceful slumber, which is perfect for picture taking.

## WHAT DO MOMS WEAR?

Keep it simple. Portraits of mom and baby where there is skin on skin contact are beautiful. If you want to have portraits done like this, wear a dark colored tank top with skinny straps. This will not only allow for skin on skin contact, but provide adequate amounts of contrast in the picture. For those who are more self-conscious, wearing a form fitting long sleeve knit shirt in dark brown, grey or cream will also work well. Moms. Pamper yourself with a new do, a manicure and/or professional makeup.

## WHAT SHOULD DAD WEAR?

For men, one of the most important things you can do is to get a professional manicure. Your hands will be in a lot of pictures, so it's important to have them look their best. As for your attire, stick with a plain black knit shirt, like a t-shirt, with no collar. Steer clear of button downs or anything with a logo on it as they will detract from the photo. If mom is wearing a color other than black, then coordinate with her attire. For hand-only shots, it is important to wear a black, knit shirt that fits snugly.

## SIBLING PORTRAITS

If you have older siblings that you would like photographed with your newborn, we will do these shots **FIRST**. Cream, ivory or white (without patterns or logos) is recommended for older siblings (tops with jeans or even dresses for girls). The more texture the better (knits, lace, etc.) They'll be barefoot, so no need to look for clean shoes.

\*Due to the nature of the session we ask your spouse take the older siblings to the park or go run errands for the rest of our session. Siblings can be a distraction and add additional stress to you during the session and loud noises may take baby out of their deep sleep.

## WHAT TO HAVE FOR BABY

Your baby should be in loose fitting pajamas that button or zip all the way down when I arrive to your home. Undressing him or her always wakes them up and we lose valuable time. Loose fitting pajamas are best because they won't leave seam lines like tighter clothing can leave on your baby's body. Have a pacifier on hand, regardless of whether you plan to use one with your baby or not. Having a pacifier will help soothe your baby during the shoot and will help move the session along with minimal discomfort for the baby. Have plenty of diapers and formula on hand for mid-session feedings and diaper changes. Have only 1-2 outfits available to photograph in. I prefer to take newborn pictures more natural, naked, wrapped in wraps or with a light blanket draped over them, so be prepared to only use 1 outfit.

## WHAT TO HAVE AVAILABLE FOR YOURSELF

Newborn photography sessions take a very long time, usually in the neighborhood of two to four hours. This means that having something to entertain yourselves with go a long way to pass the time. The nice thing is we will be shooting in the comfort of your own home. Feel free to hang out on your couch and watch some TV while I take your baby's pictures. Also, feel free to snack, mom and dad need to keep their energy levels up and this can be pretty draining.

## 2-3 HOURS BEFORE THE SESSION

This may seem counterproductive, but in the hours immediately preceding the session, keep your baby AWAKE! Keeping your baby awake now means that he or she will be sleeping during the session. To keep your baby awake, talk, play, or even give your baby a bath. Not only will this help exercise baby's lungs, but will tire baby out and will ensure that baby's hair is nice and clean upon my arrival. Also, wait and feed your baby until I get to your home. Remove all bandages (from shots, etc.) from baby's skin at least one hour before I arrive at your home. These bandages cannot be removed in post processing and, if left on, will show up in the final images.

## WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR SESSION

### TEMPERATURE

Please raise your thermostat in your home to 80 degrees or higher. I know this may seem very warm to us, but your baby cannot regulate their body temperature yet and this will be comfortable for them while naked. This being noted please dress appropriately for the session. Keeping in mind that I will be at your home for up to four hours and I will also have a small space heater next to baby. It's going to be warm!

### LIGHTING

I prefer to shoot in natural light. Since everyone's home is unique, I am always prepared for any light scenario. From extreme natural light to a room with no windows, I will always bring artificial light to use if needed. If possible, please try to clear a 10x10 square (or larger) in front of a natural light source as this will help my set up go quickly and smoothly. This space, in most situations, is in a kitchen/dining area in front of a sliding glass door or in your living room in front of your bay window. We will discuss this before I arrive at your home.

### BABIES RUN THE SHOW

Your baby will ultimately dictate how a session will proceed. If he or she is fussy, it is important not to react to it and stress because the baby will pick up on this and will become more agitated. Simply sit calmly and allow me to work with your baby. I have plenty of experience and infinite patience, so know that everything will be fine.

### SAFETY FIRST

It is important for you to know that there is the utmost importance placed on the safety of you baby. Poses will never be forced nor will any unsafe pose be used in any manner during your shoot. Everything I bring to your home is completely sanitized after every session and all liners used will be washed in free and clear detergent. I will not photograph your baby if I am sick or otherwise not able to photograph your child in a safe manner and will reschedule with you as soon as practical.

### PROPS AND 'PINTEREST REQUESTS'

I will supply all of the backdrops, bins, baskets, headbands, wraps, other knit outfits or bonnets and more for the session. My style tends to lean more toward simple photos that focus on baby. I am always open to new ideas but be aware I will not use anything that will harm, irritate or look awkward or controversial (guns, knives, etc.) near your newborn. If you see something you like in any of my galleries, be sure to mention it before your session. I am open to suggestions on poses that you may have seen from Pinterest but please understand that every pose we do depends on how well baby cooperates and how safe the pose is for your little one. I cannot guarantee any pose for this reason.

### OUTDOOR SESSIONS

Outdoor scenes are available if the weather permits it, and are done at the end of the session.

### AFTER THE SESSION

When the session is complete, I will need time to process the photographs and make the necessary edits in order to present you with the best images possible. It generally takes two to three weeks from the date of your session to be able to look at the proofs on your online gallery, so please be patient.