

Beebe School of Nursing  
Nursing 201 – Nursing Care of Special Populations  
Newborn Reflexes

<b>Reflex</b>	<b>How to elicit</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>Rooting</b>	Brush or stroke the newborn's cheek near the corner of his mouth.	Serves to help the baby find food. Disappears at 4 months.
<b>Sucking</b>	Stimulate the lips, cheek or corner of the mouth with nipple or finger	The newborn makes a sucking motion; sucks and takes food. Begins to diminish at about 6 months of age but may persist throughout life. The reflex disappears immediately if it is never stimulated. May observe during sleep.
<b>Palmar grasp</b>	Place an object in a newborn's palm,	The infant will grasp it by closing his fingers on it. Newborn begins to grasp meaningfully at about 3 months of age. Disappears at 6 weeks to 3 months.
<b>Plantar grasp</b>	Touches the sole of the newborn's foot at the base of the toes with an object.	The Infant's toes grasp in the same manner as his fingers do. Disappears at 8-9 months, in preparation for walking.
<b>Stepping (walking)</b>	Hold the infant in a vertical position and his feet touch a hard surface	The infant will take a few quick alternating steps. Disappears at 3-4 months.
<b>Tonic Neck (fencing)</b>	With a relaxed newborn on his back, his head is quickly turned to one side.	The arm and leg on the side to which his head is turned extend, whereas the opposite arm and leg flex. This reflex does not appear to have a function. It does stimulate eye coordination, since the extended arm moves in front of the face. Disappears by 6 months.
<b>Moro (startle)</b>	Sudden jarring or change in equilibrium, such as allowing the head to drop backward an inch while in a supine position, or a loud noise.	The newborn symmetrically extends, the adducts, both arms while hands close and thumb and index finger form a "C" shape. Disappears by 6months, when the infant can roll away from danger.
<b>Landau</b>	Hold the infant in a prone position with a hand underneath him supporting his trunk, he should demonstrate some muscle tone.	While he may not be able to lift his head or arch his back (as he will be at 3 months) neither should he sag into an inverted "U" position. The latter response indicates extremely poor muscle tone. Disappears at 12-24 months.
<b>Bauer's Response (spontaneous crawling)</b>	Pressing hands gently on the soles of the feet	Spontaneous crawling movement. Difficult to get in the first 2-3 days.
<b>Arm Recoil</b>	Extend both of the baby's arms simultaneously by pulling them outward by the wrists. Let go quickly and observe the response.	Normally both arms should flex briskly at the elbows. This response should be strongest in the first 2 days of life but should persist throughout neonatal life. Watch for symmetry.
<b>Red Reflex</b>	Visualize a small red-orange circular spot with the ophthalmoscope at the pupils.	The red reflex is caused by light falling on the retina. Absence indicate opacity of the lens.
<b>Corneal</b>	Touching the cornea lightly	Will result in eye closure.
<b>Babinski</b>	Stroke the outer sole of foot and then across ball of foot.	Toes hyperextend (positive) in contrast to the adult who flexes his toes. Converts to adult type by 3-7 months