



Tell Me Why

WHY?

I Have a Belly Button



Jennifer Colby



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A New Baby in the Family

Mariah's new little brother just came home from the hospital. She helped her mother change the baby's diaper.

“What is that thing on his tummy?” she asked. “Is he okay?”

Mariah's mom assured her that her brother was just fine. “All babies have this when they are born,” her mom said. “It's actually an **umbilical cord** stump.”



All newborn babies have an umbilical cord stump.

Mariah was confused. “A cord stump? What’s that?”
“It was part of how your brother lived inside me,”
Mom said. “The cord used to be longer. It connected
us. Now this is what’s left. It will fall off soon. All belly
buttons start out this way!”
“You mean just like mine?” Mariah asked.
“Yes,” Mom said, “just like yours.”



All people have belly buttons.

A baby is born with a long cord attached to the belly. The doctor delivers the baby and cuts the cord. The baby does not feel any pain. The cord stump is what is left. This will fall off in one to two weeks. The belly button is what is left in that space.

Once a baby is born, the belly button is not used for anything.



When a baby is born, the doctor needs to cut the cord.

The Cord's Job

A baby growing inside its mother cannot eat food or breathe.

That's where the umbilical cord comes in. It is attached to the **placenta** inside the mother's **womb**. Your belly button marks the spot where the placenta was attached when you were a baby!

The umbilical cord looks like a twisted rope. It grows longer during the **pregnancy**.

Most umbilical cords grow to be about 20 inches (51 centimeters) long.



MAKE A GUESS!

A belly button is also called a navel. Some oranges are called navel oranges. Why do you think they are called that?



The umbilical cord makes it possible for a baby to grow while inside its mother.

The umbilical cord carries **nutrients** and oxygen from the mother to the baby. It also takes **waste** away from the baby.

A **newborn** baby can drink milk and get rid of waste on its own. The baby does not need an umbilical cord anymore.

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