

## **Newborn Portrait Session Prep Guide**

### **Let's get you on the books!**

Your first few days & weeks as new parents are incredible, and exhausting, and fleeting! The last thing you need on your plate is the added stress of researching and booking the perfect newborn photographer! This is one of the reasons I strongly recommend you schedule your newborn session BEFORE your baby is born. This ensures you a spot on my calendar and takes the stress of finding the right photographer off your plate as new parents.

Contact me as early in your pregnancy as you'd like. Once your retainer is paid and contract is signed, your due date will be on my calendar. Then, once baby arrives, you can shoot me an email, text or phone call to arrange your session date and time.

### **Location**

I am proud to provide your newborn portrait session in the comfort of your own home! I bring the entire setup to you. This keeps baby in a familiar environment, and you don't have to worry about getting your brand new baby out of the house! Also, if the weather permits and you're comfortable with the idea, I LOVE to take a few newborn pictures outdoors – especially family pictures! Babies love warmth and most of the year, the Florida panhandle provides us with an abundance of that.

Don't worry about cleaning up because I'm coming over. I need less space than you think and I'm more than happy shifting furniture around if I need to (and I promise to move it back when I'm done).

### **When will I schedule baby's session?**

Traditionally, newborn sessions are done when baby is between 5 & 14 days old (earlier is better). Newborns grow and change FAST and we want to try to capture them during the super sleepy, curly stage. After 2 weeks, babies are more easily disturbed while sleeping as well as learning how nice it feels to stretch out.

Though babies under 14 days are the norm, this doesn't mean newborn portraits can't be done on slightly older newborns! I've photographed newborns from day 5 – day 26 and always managed to get the sleepy, curly poses the parents wanted. Just remember that older newborns require more patience and usually more preparation.

### **Day of preparation**

Full babies are happy babies. And happy babies are sleepy babies. And a sleepy baby is what we want!

So, how do you get there?

- On the day of your session, I ask that you try to keep baby awake for at least an hour before I'm scheduled to arrive.
- Plan on feeding baby right around my arrival time (or you can start the feeding once I get there). It takes me around 10 – 15 minutes to scout out the best window light in your house to shoot near, bring in my gear, and set up. This is a perfect time for you to give baby a nice big feeding.
  - Plan on at least 1 extra feeding while I'm there – all that movement while I'm there helps baby work up a big appetite.
- If possible, go ahead and have baby stripped down to just a diaper and nice warm blanket.
- If you're willing, a pacifier can make a huge difference in calming an unsettled baby.

### **Warmth**

Please don't be offended if I ask you to turn off the ceiling fan(s) in the area I'm photographing baby in. Newborns are used to being all bundled up and warm, so whatever we can do to help with that is good. I'll also have a heating pad that I sometimes use to warm the blankets before I put baby on them.

### **Noise**

Please do whatever you can to help keep noise to a minimum during the portrait session. I'll have a white noise machine with me, but it can only block out so much.

### **A Little Patience & Relax**

Many parents are surprised (and a bit daunted) when they see that my newborn portrait sessions include up to 3 hours of my time. That's a lot of time. BUT, I promise I won't be shooting the entire 3 hours. I allocate 3 hours because it often takes a bit of time to get baby into a deep sleep, plus we'll have potty breaks (or potty clean up breaks), feeding breaks, and just snuggle breaks. So relax, put your feet up, take a shower, take a nap, update your Facebook, whatever. Many parents take turns hanging out with and spotting for me so they each get a little break.

### **Poop, etc**

Babies poop. And pee. And spit up. A lot! No worries; I'm prepared. It's part of the gig! I bring extra cloth diapers to help with clean up. This is also why I wash all baby props and blankets between each session. If you had some rags, or paper towels, or wipes available nearby that'd be awesome too. Who knows, maybe we won't need them.

\*If you want shots with baby in his/her diaper, then I strongly suggest getting a cloth diaper or diaper cover in a solid color. Editing Elmo and Big Bird off newborn Pampers is time consuming and not always easy to do. ☺

### **Circumcision**

Please let me know if you are planning to circumcise (this can be something we discuss before baby even arrives)! Circumcision leaves the area raw and a bit painful for a few days after the procedure which can make posing and keeping baby content during their session difficult or impossible. Because of this, baby's newborn session needs to take place BEFORE the procedure or at least 5 days after. (Before is definitely my preferred option.)

If I should arrive at your home and find baby freshly circumcised, I'll be forced to reschedule your session. Baby's comfort and safety is my highest priority!

### **Sibling & Parent Portraits**

If baby has siblings that you'd like photographed with the newborn, we'll do these at the beginning of the session. I recommend having children in coordinating outfits with no logos. Little boys looks adorable shirtless for pictures with the new baby and little girls looks so pretty in simple cream or white (I can even use one of my newborn wraps as a simple top for big sister).

\*Please make sure to let me know on your Newborn Client Questionnaire or via email, text, or phone call if siblings will be included in the session.

I strongly encourage parents allow me to capture their portraits with the new baby. Trust me, that selfie isn't going to cut in a few years it when you're looking for a picture of you with the baby! No need to get all dressed up: brush your hair, put on a tad of makeup and a clean top, and you'll be all set! Maybe check that your nails are clean. This is a great "excuse" for why you need some extra alone time and a long shower that morning! Feel free to blame me!

I promise you won't regret it.

One last thing...

### **Props & Requests**

My newborn photography consists of posing on white or light colored backgrounds with very simple props – hats, wraps, or little pants – or au natural. And my posing style is simple – keeping baby in a more comfortable/organic pose. I want the main emphasis of the portrait to be baby itself. To this end, yes, I'll definitely try to incorporate your requests into the session as long as baby's safety is guaranteed.

If you see a specific item in my albums that you'd like me to be sure to bring, just let me know!