

Information for breastfeeding families

Waking a Sleepy Baby



Babies are often sleepy during the first week or so. They may not awaken often enough to feed: remember newborns need to eat 8-12 times per 24 hours. Or once the feeding has begun, they may fall asleep again. Here are a few suggestions for waking your baby. Some work better on certain babies than others. When one quits working, try another.

Stimulate all of your baby's senses

- Hold baby skin-to-skin for 15-30 minutes
- Undress the baby to his diaper to cool him off slightly
- Rub and massage the baby in various places
 - Top of the head
 - Bottom of the feet
 - Up and down the spine
 - Across the belly
 - Up and down the arm
 - The spot right above the belly button
- Change the position of the baby, from cradle hold to football hold and back again
- Do "baby sit-ups". Rock the baby from a sitting to lying position and back again. Rock gently back and forth until the baby's eyes open. *Do not* "jack-knife" the baby (force him forward)
- Talk to the baby. Babies respond to mom's voice
- Try adjusting room lights up for stimulation or down so the baby can comfortably open his eyes

- Start to pull the nipple from the baby's mouth (Make sure that this does not result in the baby sucking on just the tip of the nipple. If it does break the suction and re-attach the baby to the breast.)
- Change the baby's diaper
- Apply a cool washcloth to the baby's head, stomach or back. (Do not let the baby become chilled. Premature infants become chilled more easily than term infants.)
- Allow your baby to suck on your finger for a few minutes
- Express some breastmilk and place just under your baby's nose. Dribble milk over the nipple while latching-on.

Signs of concern

If your baby is un-arousable after a reasonable amount of time and the use of several techniques, contact your physician.

Feel free to duplicate Lactation Education Resources 2011.

Please be aware that the information provided is intended solely for general educational and informational purposes only. It is neither intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Always seek the advice of your physician for any questions you may have regarding your or your infant's medical condition. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have received in this information.