

Baby's Second Night

You have made it through your first 24 hours as a new mother. Even if you have other children, you are a new mother again. Now it is your Baby's Second Night.

This is the time your baby knows that he is no longer in your warm tummy where he spent the last 9 months and it is scary out here! He cannot hear your heart beat and the other sounds he heard when he was inside you. Instead, he is in a bed all alone.

During the day, many people have held your baby. He is getting used to new noises, lights, sounds, and smells. He has also found his voice and each time you take him away from your breast and warm body, he cries LOUDLY! He is telling you that he was happy being close to you.

When he cries, you put him back on your breast. He is happy and feeds for a short time before falling asleep. When you put him back to bed, he cries again. New mothers think this happens because the baby is hungry and not getting enough milk. However, this really happens because he wants to snuggle up to your warm body. This waking up and sleeping pattern can go on for hours and is tiring for you and your baby.

You can help your baby by letting him sleep at your breast after a good feed. Do not burp or move him, but relax and snuggle for a while instead. You will see your baby go into a light sleep first and if he is moved now, he will wake up. As you snuggle longer, your baby goes into a deeper sleep. Watch your baby to learn the signs of a deep sleep. This is when you can move your baby to bed. If he starts to wake up, this is a sign that he was not in a deep sleep, so wait a while longer. This may take up to 30 minutes.

You can also let your baby suck on his thumb or fingers any time he wants. He did this in your tummy before he was born and if his hands are covered with mittens, this can be strange to him. He may be saying, "Where are my hands?" He has no way of soothing himself with mittens on. Your baby needs to be able to touch and feel. When he puts his hands on your breast, this helps increase your supply of milk. So, take the mittens off and let him get to his hands. If he scratches himself, do not worry, he will heal. After all, he had fingernails when he was inside you and was fine.

After Baby's Second Night, there may be times when your baby does not go to sleep. This may be when you had a busy day, such as going to the doctor, going out shopping, or visiting grandparents. Your baby is just saying that he wants some snuggle time at the breast. For your baby, your breast is "home."



We use the word "he" in this document because we feel it is simpler than writing "he or she" every time.

Adapted with permission from Jan Barger RN, MA, IBCLC/Lactation Education Consultants