

GETTING TO  
KNOW YOUR  
**BABY**





## Having a baby is a very exciting time!

Learning about baby behavior  
can help you understand  
your baby's needs...

### sleep



Night time waking  
can be hard.  
Babies sleep differently  
than adults.

*Learn how  
babies sleep.*



### cues



Babies find ways  
to tell you what  
they need.

*Learn how your  
baby communicates  
with you.*



### crying



Babies cry for  
many reasons,  
not just because  
they are hungry.

*Learn other reasons  
babies cry and  
how to calm  
your crying baby.*





# how does your baby sleep

## LIGHT SLEEP & DEEP SLEEP

Babies go through periods of light sleep and deep sleep. Both types of sleep are important for your baby's health. It is best to wait for signs of deep sleep before laying your baby down.

LIGHT SLEEP	DEEP SLEEP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moves around and makes noises</li> <li>Eyes twitch or opens and closes eyes quickly</li> <li>Fast and slow breathing</li> <li>Dreams</li> <li>Wakes up easily</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Doesn't move very much</li> <li>Relaxed and floppy arms and legs</li> <li>Regular steady breathing</li> <li>Makes sucking movements</li> <li>Doesn't wake easily</li> </ul>

## SLEEP PATTERNS

Some babies need more sleep than others. As your baby gets older, sleep patterns will change and become more predictable. This is what you can expect:



### Newborn to 6 Weeks

During the first 6 weeks, your baby's sleep will be unpredictable. Baby is still getting used to the new world. Newborn babies sleep for only a few hours at a time and they will wake up many times throughout the day and night. This is normal and healthy for them.



### 6 to 8 Weeks

Your baby may sleep more at night and be awake more during the day. Waking up at night is still normal and healthy.



### About 3 Months

At night, your baby will sleep for longer periods of time, and wake up less often.



### About 6 Months

Your baby may sleep up to 6 hours at a time.



- Babies are supposed to wake up at night.
- Babies need to wake up to be fed and comforted.
- Waking up at night is important to keep your baby healthy.
- Babies may have times when they wake up more often due to growth spurts, sickness, or changes in routine.
- Doctors recommend that babies should be put on their backs to sleep.



# what is your baby saying cues

## "I am HUNGRY. I am FULL."

Newborn babies have to be fed often because their stomachs are very small. Compared to older babies, newborn babies are more likely to be hungry when they cry.

I'M HUNGRY	I'M FULL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keeps hands near mouth</li> <li>Bends arms and legs</li> <li>Makes sucking noises</li> <li>Puckers lips</li> <li>Searches for the nipple (roots)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sucks slower or stops sucking</li> <li>Relaxes hands and arms</li> <li>Turns away from the nipple</li> <li>Pushes away</li> <li>Falls asleep</li> </ul>

## "I want to be near YOU. I need something to be DIFFERENT?"

As your newborn baby gets older, it will be easier to tell when it is time to interact, learn or play.

Learning is hard work for babies and they can get tired quickly. Your baby will show you signs that something needs to be different.

I WANT TO BE NEAR YOU	I NEED SOMETHING TO BE DIFFERENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has a relaxed face and body</li> <li>Follows your voice and face</li> <li>Reaches toward you</li> <li>Stares at your face</li> <li>Raises their head up</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Looks away, turns away, or arches back</li> <li>Frowns or have a glazed look in the eyes</li> <li>Stiffens hands, arms or legs</li> <li>Yawns or falls asleep</li> </ul>

Responding to cues before your baby starts to fuss may help your baby cry less.



- Babies are born with the ability to communicate. They use cues to show parents what they need.
- With practice, your baby will get better at giving cues.
- Watching your baby will help you learn what they need.
- By responding quickly to your baby's cues, you will learn to communicate with each other. This will help baby to feel safe and secure.



# why is your baby crying

## STEPS TO CALM YOUR CRYING BABY

Babies use crying as a way to communicate many different things. They use crying to tell you that they need your help. When your baby is crying:

### 1 TRY TO FIGURE OUT THE REASON FOR CRYING

For example, is baby:

- In need of a diaper change?
- Tired?
- Too hot or too cold?
- Hungry?
- Overwhelmed?
- Uncomfortable?

There may be times when you've checked everything and your baby still cries. When this happens:

### 2 HOLD YOUR BABY CLOSE TO YOU

### 3 REPEAT THE SAME ACTION OVER & OVER

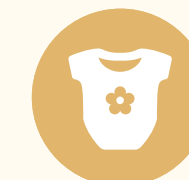
You might try one of the following:

- Speaking or singing softly
- Gently rocking, swaying or bouncing your baby
- Gently massaging the back, arms and legs

### 4 REMEMBER TO BE PATIENT

Calming your baby takes time. Stick with the same action for several minutes before trying something different.

Call your doctor if you think your baby is crying too much.



- Babies cry for many reasons, not just because they are hungry.
- Crying can be very stressful for new parents, but it is one way that babies communicate their needs.
- Responding to cues quickly may help your baby cry less.
- As baby gets older, it will get easier to show you what they need, and they will cry less often.



Waking up at night is important for your baby's health. This is why new parents can expect to get less sleep. For a few months, most of your sleep will be in short 2-3 hour stretches.

These tips will NOT make your baby sleep through the night, but they may help YOU get a few more minutes of sleep.

### Keep baby close at night

Doctors recommend you put your baby's crib or bassinet in the same room for the first few months. When your baby wakes up and needs something, you won't have far to go.

### Keep the lights low

Keeping lights low while you feed, burp or change your baby's diaper during the night will help you get back to sleep more quickly. You do not want low lighting if you are doing something that requires your full attention, such as giving medicine.

### Sleep when your baby sleeps

While it may seem impossible, try to sleep when your baby sleeps. Even 90 minutes of sleep can help you feel more rested.

### ASK FOR HELP

- If you start to feel angry or overwhelmed, put baby down in a safe place and take a break.
- Ask a friend or family member to give you a break by helping with your baby or household chores.



For more help with baby behavior:



P.O. Box 64882 • St. Paul, MN 55164-0882  
1-800-657-3942 • 1-800-WIC-4030  
[www.health.state.mn.us/wic](http://www.health.state.mn.us/wic)

To obtain this information in a different format, call 651-201-4444



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