

WHAT TO EXPECT... THE SECOND NIGHT

Congratulations, you have made it through your first 24 hours with your newborn. Now it is the second night. Most babies are very sleepy their first 24 hours of life. They have been through a HUGE and very tiring transition.

Now your little one discovers that they are no longer in the warmth and comfort of the womb. Your baby is not hearing your familiar heartbeat, the swooshing of the blood flowing through your arteries or the soothing sound of your lungs. Instead, they are in a crib, wearing a diaper as well as a sleeper and covered with a light blanket. All sorts of people have been handling them, and your baby has not yet become accustomed to the new noises, lights, sounds and smells. Your baby has found one thing though, and that's his or her voice. You will discover that each time you take your baby off the breast and put them in the bassinet, they'll protest loudly.

Every time you put your baby back on the breast, they will nurse for a while, then fall asleep. As you take them off and put them back to bed, it is common that they will cry again, start to root around and look for you. This can go on, seemingly for hours. A lot of mothers are convinced that their milk isn't "in" yet, and their baby is starving. Instead, it is the baby's sudden awakening to the fact that the most comfortable place for them to be is at the breast. It is the closest to "home" they can get. This is fairly common among babies, and lactation consultants all over the world have noticed the same thing.

So what do you do? When your baby drifts off to sleep at the breast after a good feed, break the suction and slide your nipple gently out of their mouth. Do not move them except to pillow their head more comfortably on your breast. Do not try to burp them, just snuggle with them until they fall into a deep sleep where they will not be disturbed by being moved. Babies go into a light

sleep state (REM), then cycle in and out of REM and deep sleep about every half hour or so. If they start to root and act as though they want to go back to the breast, that is fine. It is their way of settling and comforting. During deep sleep, the baby's breathing is very quiet and regular and there is no movement beneath their eyelids.

Your baby's hands were their best friends in utero. They could suck on their thumb or their fingers any time they were the slightest bit disturbed or uncomfortable. When your baby was born and someone put mittens on their hands, they suddenly lost that comfort. They have no way of soothing themselves with those mittens on. Babies need to touch and feel, and even their touch on your breast will increase your oxytocin levels which will help boost your milk supply. Another helpful hint is to take their mittens off and loosen the blanket so they can touch and feel. They might scratch themselves, but they will heal very rapidly. After all, your baby had fingernails when they were inside you, and no one put mittens on them then.

Every once in a while at home, your baby may cry and protest, particularly if you have changed their environment in going to the doctor, to the church, to the mall or to the grandparents. Do not let it throw you. Sometimes babies just need some extra snuggling at the breast since it is "home" for the baby.

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