“So are you getting any sleep with that new baby?” “Is she sleeping through the night yet?”

New parents hear many messages about sleep. It is probably one of the most common things discussed amongst new parents, and well-meaning friends and family. Many times “advice” about sleep focuses on how to “fix” the baby to get them to sleep longer, and sets up unrealistic expectations for baby’s sleep.

WIC can help new parents understand their newborn baby’s behavior including how babies sleep and what are normal sleep patterns. This can help parents be confident that it’s normal and healthy for newborns to wake often, and there is nothing wrong--such as the baby not getting enough breastmilk.

Talking about sleep during the prenatal period will help prepare parents for what to expect, but this is usually only the beginning of the sleep discussion. Moms often have questions about their baby’s sleep at the infant certification appointment. These “questions” may come across as comments or frustrations about sleeping or waking. This is a great opportunity to share with new mothers, what you know about normal baby behavior, even if sleep had been discussed prenatally.

Sharing with parents that babies sleep for longer stretches of time as they get older and that babies’ longest stretch of sleep will occur around 6 weeks -- can be very reassuring. It can also be very helpful to simply acknowledge that waking up every 2-3 hours with a baby is hard - but assuring them that it won’t last forever.

**Staff Activities for Reviewing Sleep/Waking:**

1. **View the Question/Answer Portion of the Sleep Section** of the “Getting to Know Your Baby” DVD/You-Tube video. Listen to how Dr. Heinig answers common questions about sleep.
   - Practice answering the same questions *in your own words*
   - Think about other questions or comments that you hear from participants about sleep. How might you answer these questions?

2. **Review the key messages on sleep and waking** outlined on the Prenatal Key Points Outline tool for staff (provided at the baby behavior training; see page 3). View the baby vignette portion of the Sleep Section of the “Getting to Know Your Baby” DVD. Listen for key messages about sleep and waking. If desired, personalize this tool to help shape your anticipatory guidance discussions with participants.
3. **Review the sleep section of the “Getting to Know Your Baby” brochure.**
   - What sections might you use to discuss common questions or concerns about sleep?
   - How might you utilize the section “Tips for Sleepy Parents”? Which tips do you think will resonate most with parents *prenatally*? How about *after the baby is born*?

4. **Review the video clips “Light Sleep” and “Deep Sleep”** with participants. (Clips are available on the BB Education DVD or by viewing the embedded clips in the BB PowerPoint.)
   - Challenge yourself to experiment with using these two video clips to illustrate the difference between light and deep sleep with pregnant moms.
   - After experimenting with the videos, what changes, if any, do you need to make to your workstation to make viewing the videos with participants easier? What else might you do to make using the videos easier?