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**

Do you find it hard to know when your baby needs to be fed or what your baby needs?

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 you can calm your crying baby.
**How does your baby sleep?**

Babies go through periods of light sleep and deep sleep. Both types of sleep are important for your baby’s health. If your baby wakes easily when you lay him down, wait for signs of sleep before you lay him down.

- Babies are supposed to wake up at night to be comfortable, and to be safe.
- Babies need to be put on their backs to sleep.
- Babies go through periods of light sleep and deep sleep. Both types of sleep will change and become more predictable. This is what you can expect:
  - Newborn to 6 Weeks: Your baby may sleep up to 6 hours at a time. He might:
    - Letters: Search for the nipple (roots), Furry or have a glazed look in his eyes, Feeds his hands, arms or legs, Falls asleep.
    - Sounds: Sucks slower or stops sucking, Pushes away.

- 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.
- As your newborn baby gets older, it will lose the ability to signal when he is ready to interact, learn or play. He might:
  - Letters: Look away, Yawn or fall asleep, Stiffen his hands, arms or legs, Makes sucking noises.
  - Sounds: Yawns, or arch his back.

**Sleep Patterns**

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

- 6 to 8 Weeks: Your baby may sleep more at night because he is awake more during the day. Waking up at night is still normal and healthy for them.
- About 3 Months: Your baby may 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.

**Why is your baby crying?**

- As your baby gets older, she will get better at letting you know what she needs. She will communicate. They use cues to show parents what they need.
- Babies are born with the ability to communicate.
- Sometimes their cues are hard to understand. Watching your baby will help you learn what they need.

**Light Sleep & Deep Sleep**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Light Sleep</th>
<th>Deep Sleep</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moves around and makes noises</td>
<td>Doesn’t move very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyes twitch or open and close eyes quickly</td>
<td>Provides steady breathing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fast and slow breathing</td>
<td>Makes sucking movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dreams</td>
<td>Doesn’t move easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wakes up easily</td>
<td>Doesn’t wake easily</td>
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</tbody>
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**Steps to Calm Your Crying Baby**

1. **Try to figure out the reason for crying.**
   - For example, is she:
     - In need of a diaper change?
     - Too hot or too cold?
     - Hungry?
     - Overwhelmed?
   - There may be times when you’ve checked everything and your baby still cries. When this happens:
   - Call your doctor if you think your baby is crying too much.

2. **Hold your baby close to you.**
   - Hungry? Hold your baby close to you.
   - Tired? Hold your baby close to you.
   - Crying for babies is normal. Babies cry for many reasons, not just because they are hungry.
   - Crying can be very stressful for new parents, but it is an important way that babies communicate their needs.

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 her back, arms and legs.

4. **Remember to be patient.**
   - Cuddling 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.
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
- Taking care of your little one can be hard work. If you start to feel angry or overwhelmed, put the 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.

For more help with baby behavior:
P.O. Box 64882
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1-800-657-3942
www.health.state.mn.us/wic

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