



Baby's second night



You've made it through your first 24 hours as a new mum. Maybe you have other children, but you are a new mum all over again... and now it's your baby's second night.

All of a sudden, your little one discovers that they're no longer back in the warmth and comfort – though a bit crowded – womb where they have spent the last 9 months – and it is SCARY out here! Your baby isn't hearing your familiar heartbeat, the swooshing of the placental arteries, the soothing sound of your lungs or the comforting gurgling of your intestines. Instead, they're in a cot, swaddled, in a nappy, a onesie, maybe a hat and a blanket.

All sorts of people have been handling them, and they've not yet become accustomed to the new noises, lights, sounds and smells. Your baby has found one thing though, and that's their voice... and you find that each time you take your baby off the breast where they've comfortably drifted off to sleep, and put them in the cot – they protest, loudly!

In fact, each time you put your baby back on the breast they nurse for a little bit and then go to sleep. As you take your baby off and put them back to bed – they cry again... and start moving around, looking for you. This goes on – seemingly for hours. A lot of mums are convinced it is because their milk isn't "in" yet, and the baby is starving.

However, it isn't that, but the baby's sudden awakening to the fact that the most comforting and comfortable place for them to be is at the breast. It's the closest to "home" they can get. It seems that this is pretty universal among babies – 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 take your nipple gently out of their mouth. Don't move your baby except to gently slide them into an upright neutral position with their head to the side. Don't try and burp – just snuggle with them until they fall into a deep sleep where they won't be disturbed by being moved.

Babies go into a light sleep state (REM) first, and then cycle in and out of REM and deep sleep about every ½ hour or so. If your baby starts to move around and acts as though they want to go back to your breast, that's fine... this is their way of settling and comforting. During deep sleep, a baby's breathing is very quiet and regular, and there is no movement beneath their eyelids.

Another helpful hint... 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. And all of a sudden they've had them taken away from them and someone has put mittens on them! Your baby has no way of soothing themselves with those mittens on. Babies need to touch – to feel – and even their touch on your breast will increase your oxytocin levels which will help boost your milk supply! So take the mittens off and loosen their blanket so they can get to their hands. Your baby might scratch themselves, but it will heal very rapidly – after all, they had fingernails when they were inside you, and no one put mittens on them then!

By the way – this might happen every once in a while at home too, particularly if you've changed their environment such as going to the doctors, to church, to the shopping centre, or to the grandparents! Don't let it throw you – sometimes babies just need some extra snuggling at the breast, because for the baby, the breast is "home."



Health
Nepean Blue Mountains
Local Health District

PO Box 63
Penrith NSW 2751
Telephone: (02) 4734 2000
Fax: (02) 4734 3737

Web: www.nbmlhd.health.nsw.gov.au
Email: NBMLHD-mail@health.nsw.gov.au
Facebook: www.facebook.com/NBMLHD
Twitter: @NBMLHD
YouTube: Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District