



# Waking a Sleepy Baby

Babies are often sleepy during the first week or so, especially during the daytime hours. They may not awaken often enough to feed: remember newborns need to eat 8 or more times per 24 hours. Or once the feeding has begun, they may fall asleep again. Here are a few suggestions for waking your baby. Some work better on certain babies than others. When one quits working, try another.

## Stimulate all of your baby's senses

- Hold baby skin-to-skin for 15-30 minutes.
- Undress the baby to diaper.
- Rub and massage the baby in various places.
  - Top of the head
  - Bottom of the feet
  - Up and down the spine
  - Across the belly
  - Up and down the arm
  - The spot right above the belly button
- Change the position of the baby, from cradle hold to football hold and back again.
- Do "baby sit-ups". Rock the baby from a sitting to lying position and back again. Rock gently back and forth until the baby's eyes open. Do not "jack-knife" the baby (force forward).
- Talk to the baby. Babies respond to parents' voices.
- Try adjusting room lights up for stimulation or down so the baby can comfortably open eyes.
- Start to pull the nipple from the baby's mouth (make sure that this does not result in the baby sucking on just the tip of the nipple. If it does, break the suction and reattach the baby to the breast.)
- Change the baby's diaper.
- Apply a cool washcloth to the baby's head, stomach or back. (Do not let the baby become chilled. Premature infants become chilled more easily than term infants.)
- Allow your baby to suck on your finger for a few minutes.
- Express some breastmilk and place under your baby's nose. Or express a few drops directly into the baby's mouth. You may also dribble milk over the nipple while latching the baby onto the breast.

### When to get additional support

- Your baby's output does not meet expectations for that day.
- Your baby will not wake to feed after a reasonable amount of time and the use of several techniques.
- You are concerned and want to talk to someone.

**Contact your healthcare provider or lactation consultant.**