

YOUR BABY'S SECOND NIGHT

You've made it through your first 24 hours with your newborn. Maybe you have other children, but you have a brand new baby and now it's their second night.

All of a sudden your little one discovers that they're no longer back in the warmth and comfort of the womb. Your baby isn't hearing your familiar heartbeat, the swooshing of the blood flowing through your arteries or the soothing sound of your lungs. Instead, they're in a crib, swaddled in a diaper, T-shirt, 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 his or her voice. You'll discover that each time you take them 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 the baby is starving. Instead, it's 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. 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. Don't move them except to pillow their head more comfortably on your breast. Don't try to burp them, 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), 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's 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've changed their environment in going to the doctor, to church, to the mall or to the grandparents. Don't let it throw you. Sometimes babies just need some extra snuggling at the breast since it is "home" for the baby.