

Baby's Second Night

And beyond

This chapter explains what new parents can expect in the first few days of their baby's life.

The First 24 Hours

After the excitement of being born, most babies rest well. During the first 24 hours outside the womb, they may:

- Have short wakeful periods when they show feeding cues
- Come to breast just to settle into the safety of mom's arms
- Open their eyes just briefly to take in the new sights and sounds before falling asleep again



Most newborns sleep a lot during their first 24 hours of life.

If a baby has periods of crying during their first day of life, it is usually easy to calm them.

The Days and Nights That Follow

After a fairly quiet first 24 hours, most parents are not prepared for what happens on the second night and beyond.

Most babies start show feeding cues quite often. They spend a lot of time on the breast, especially at night. Research shows that feedings on the second night tend to occur from 9 p.m. to 3 a.m.

Newborns also find out that the most comforting place to be is at the breast. It's where they feel safest and most connected to their mom, so they want to be there a lot.

Many new parents are surprised by so many feeding requests. They may feel concerned because the mother's milk volume is still small. Some may worry that their baby is not getting enough to eat.

Try not to worry about this. Feed your baby often, so that they get small amounts of your special "first milk." This is perfect for now.

Helpful Tips

In the days after birth, your baby learns a lot about their new world. With tired parents and a very active baby, it can be challenging!

Here are some ideas to help you through these days:

- Be ready for a busy night at least until mother's milk increases. Remind yourself that this is normal.
- During the day, take plenty of naps. Try to sleep for 90 minutes at a time between feedings. For adults, 90 minutes is a full sleep cycle. Most people feel more rested if they sleep for 90 minutes than if they sleep more or less than that.
- Avoid having visitors when your baby is asleep, so that you can nap during these times.
- Ask your support people to comfort your baby when you feel like you need a break.
- Hold your baby skin-to-skin (*kangaroo care* -- see below).
- Plan to go to bed right after night feedings.

Your baby brings great change, some challenge, and a new love into your life. Do your best to enjoy the adventure!

About Kangaroo Care

Holding your baby skin-to-skin helps both your baby and you. While you are awake, do this as much as possible for the first weeks.

For Baby

- More stable heart rate, better breathing and use of oxygen
- Better sleep time and less crying
- More rapid weight gain
- More successful breastfeeding

For Parents

- Improves bonding, feelings of closeness with their babies
- Increases mom's levels of *oxytocin* – this hormone increases feelings of well-being and also helps boost milk supply!

Questions?

Your questions are important. Talk with your nurse or doctor if you have questions or concerns.

Now, please go back to the Table of Contents in this workbook and check the box so your nurses will know you have read this chapter.