

# Breastfeeding a Sleepy Baby



Newborn babies need to eat 8-12 times per 24 hours. Babies are often sleepy during the first week or so. They may not awaken often enough to feed, 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 your baby's senses:***

- Hold baby skin-to-skin for 15-30 minutes.
- Undress the baby in his/her diaper to cool him/her off slightly.
- 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 a lying position and back again. Rock gently back and forth until the baby's eyes open.
- Talk to the baby. Babies respond to mom's voice.
- Try adjusting room lights up for stimulation or down so the baby can comfortably open his/her eyes.
- 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 breast milk and place the nipple just under your baby's nose.
- If your baby is sleepy at the breast, perform a breast compression to enhance milk transfer which may also wake up a sleepy baby and re-engage feeding.

## ***Signs of Concern***

- If your baby is unarousable after a reasonable amount of time and the use of several techniques, contact your physician.

