What is My Baby Trying to Tell Me?

Quick Tips for Parents

- Ask friends or family for help.
- Feed your baby when she lets you know she is hungry, not by watching the clock.
- Turn off lights and TV where your baby sleeps.
- Rest while your baby sleeps (even sitting quietly can help you feel more rested).
- If you start to feel angry or overwhelmed, put the baby down in a safe place and take a break.
- Contact your health care provider if you think your baby is crying too much.

Light Sleep
- Wakes up easily
- Moves around and makes noises
- Has a lot of eye movement
- Dreams
- Brain grows and develops!

Deep Sleep
- Doesn’t wake up easily
- Has relaxed and floppy arms and legs
- Doesn’t move very much
- Brain rests!

Wait for signs of deep sleep before laying your newborn down.

UNDERSTANDING SLEEP

Place your baby to sleep on a firm surface, free of any objects, and on her back. Newborns fall asleep in light sleep and go into deep sleep in about 20 minutes.
Your baby is able to tell you what she needs without words by using her body cues. Responding to her cues can help your baby be calm and happy.

“**I am hungry**” cues
- Keeps her hands near her mouth
- Bends her arms and legs
- Makes sucking noises
- Puckers her lips
- Searches for the nipple (roots)

This means she is uncomfortable or bothered by something. Let her turn away or rest. Noise, lights, or too many people can be tiring for babies.

“**I am full**” cues
- Sucks slower or stops sucking
- Relaxes her hands and arms
- Turns away from the nipple
- Pushes away
- Falls asleep

These cues mean she’s ready to stop eating.

“**I need something changed**” cues
- Looks or turns away or arches her back
- Frowns or has a glazed look in her eyes
- Stiffens her hands, arms or legs
- Yawns or falls asleep

This means she is ready to interact, learn or play with you!

“**I want to be near you**” cues
- Has a relaxed face and body
- Follows your voice and face
- Reaches toward you
- Stares at your face
- Raises her head

Notice the difference between “I am hungry” cues and “I need something changed” cues!

Now is the time to feed, before she gets too hungry.