

## TIPS FOR ROUSING A SLEEPY NEWBORN

Newborns need to nurse 8-12 times in twenty-four hours in order to gain weight, stimulate the mother's milk production, and avoid problems that can occur if newborn jaundice becomes exaggerated. Usually, a newborn nurses every 2-3 hours with perhaps one longer stretch of 4-5 hours at night. If a new baby tends to sleep for longer periods, he may need to be awakened and encouraged to nurse more often. Also, some babies fall asleep at the breast without nursing long enough. A baby needs to suck actively for at least ten to fifteen minutes on the first breast. After he seems satisfied or loses interest, offer the second breast. He may or may not take the second breast at every feeding.

The following tips can encourage a sleepy baby to breastfeed more effectively.

### *WAKING TECHNIQUES*

- Try arousing the baby when he's in a light sleep cycle—his eyes are closed, you can see rapid eye movement under the eyelids, he may have arm-leg movements, his lips make sucking movements, facial expression changes.
- Dim the lights as bright lights may make him close his eyes.
- Talk directly to the baby, try to make eye contact.
- Unwrap the baby down to his diaper if the room is warm—sucking activity decreases in temperatures above 80°F (27°C).
- Hold the baby upright in a sitting or standing position.
- Bend the baby into gentle sit-ups in your lap by raising his head, shoulders, and torso—never bring the baby's legs up when he's sitting, i.e., "jack knife," as this could cause internal damage.
- Loosen or remove blankets.

### *INCREASING STIMULATION*

- Rub or pat the baby's back or walk your fingers up the baby's spine.
- Change the baby's diaper.
- Manipulate his arms and legs in gentle bicycling motions.
- Try a gentle "pat-a-cake."
- Increase skin-to-skin contact with a baby massage or sponge bath with mother
- Gently rub baby's hands or feet.
- Wipe baby's forehead and cheeks with a cool, damp cloth.
- Circle baby's lips with fingertip.

### *KEEPING THE BABY INTERESTED*

- Make sure the hand supporting the breast keeps the weight of the breast off the baby's chin.
- Express milk onto baby's lips.
- Switch breasts when baby's sucking slows down.
- Change diaper/burp baby between sides.
- Try nursing in a football or cross cradle hold position, rather than cradle hold.
- Massage baby's crown in a circular motion while nursing.

A baby who is not nursing often enough may not be getting enough milk. Watch for 6-8 wet cloth diapers (5-6 disposables) and 2-5 bowel movements every 24 hours, beginning on the third day after birth. For more help with breastfeeding, contact a La Leche League Leader or other breastfeeding specialist. A baby who is not gaining weight should be checked by a doctor.

For breastfeeding support, contact:

