

7 Secrets of Baby Behavior

Babies' behaviors can be confusing. Here are some tips to help you understand what your baby is trying to tell you.



1 Your baby can tell you what he needs before he learns to talk.

Your baby can communicate with you from the moment he is born. When your baby wants to be near you, he will stare at your face or follow your voice. When your baby needs something to be different, he will turn or look away, or have a glazed, tired expression.



2 Babies cry for many reasons, not only because they are hungry.

Your baby cries for lots of reasons. Your baby might cry because she is tired, has a dirty diaper, or needs a break from what is going on around her. You can tell what your baby needs by looking for other signals besides crying, like wiggling, turning away, or a sleepy face. Learning your baby's cues can help you make your baby more comfortable before she starts crying. If you need more information about how to tell if your baby is hungry, talk to your lactation consultant or doctor.



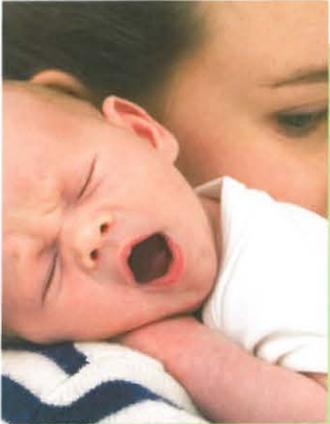
3 The easiest way to soothe your crying baby is to do the same thing over and over.

When your baby keeps crying even after everything has been checked, she needs your help to calm down. She needs you to use the same soothing movements over and over when she is upset. This means holding her close and softly singing the same song, or rocking, swaying, or bouncing her gently over and over. You may have to do these calming things for a few minutes or longer to give your baby time to calm down.



4 When young babies first fall asleep, they can wake up easily.

Have you ever rocked your baby to sleep and then quietly tried to lay him down only to have him wake up the moment his little body hits the bed? Unlike adults, young babies dream when they first fall asleep and when babies dream they wake up easily. After about 20-30 minutes babies will sleep more deeply and will be harder to wake up. By waiting 20-30 minutes to put your baby down, he will be less likely to wake up right away because he will be in a deeper sleep.



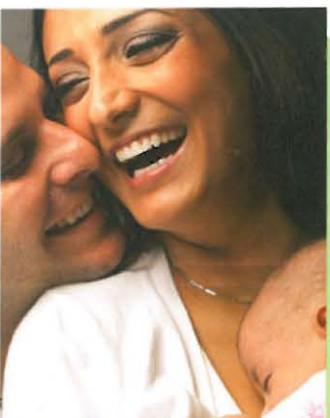
5 Waking up at night is healthy for your baby.

It is normal for babies to wake up at night. Babies sleep lightly and dream more than adults and dreaming helps their brains grow and develop. Young babies need to wake to eat, to have their diapers changed, and to stay warm. As babies get older, they fall asleep more deeply and sleep longer at night. This is good news for tired parents!



6 More play time during the day usually means more sleep for you and your baby at night!

Your baby needs exercise just like you! Physical activity will help your baby build strong muscles and learn to sit up and crawl. Newborns get exercise by being able to move their arms and legs freely in a safe place. Older babies love to move and play with you. Find fun activities that you can do with your baby right from the start. Developmentally, your baby will need to wake up at night for several months, but being active during the day may help you both sleep better at night!



7 After the first 6 to 8 weeks of caring for your newborn, things will get a lot easier.

Taking care of a newborn baby is not easy. Your baby will probably wake every 1-2 hours in the first 6 to 8 weeks, and it can be hard to understand what he needs. This can be very demanding on you as a parent! Fortunately, your baby will change fast! By 2 1/2 to 3 months of age, your baby will sleep for longer periods of time and it will be much easier for you to understand what he needs.