

Spilled Milk – Don't Cry Over Your Infant

Simplifying your approach to your new baby, by a pediatrician & mom

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Section One

Bringing Baby Home: *Lullabies & Baby Cries*

So the baby shower is over. The crisped-sheet nursery crib is covered with crusty spit-up, and you have begun your 24/7 baby call. Nothing looks the same. The monitor light blinks like a neon sign, reminding you of the long-haul ahead. Stop and take a deep breath. I know that this may not be what you envisioned. To the world this is a splendid wonderful event! You will share in this excitement when you've gotten more sleep. And you *will* one day get more sleep!

Snug As a Bug In a Big Empty Crib? Swaddling is the process of wrapping up an infant securely in a one-layered blanket. Not every baby enjoys this position, but for some babies that startle themselves awake or feel lost in their bassinet or crib, this is a great option. Remember, baby just got jolted from a snug, warm womb. There are several swaddling blankets in stores that are good. Most have velcro straps, but there are others that have long edge flaps to wrap around your baby and hold the arms in place. Many can be ordered online. Essentially, you can use a large receiving blanket to achieve the swaddling state. First you arrange the blanket in a diamond fashion. Fold down the top corner. Lay baby's head so that the top blanket edge is even with his lower ears. Take the left corner and pull it over as taught as you can over the baby with arms at his side. Tuck this corner under his back on the opposite side. Take the bottom corner and pull it up over the feet and tuck it under the part of the blanket overlying his chest. The right side is pulled over finally and tucked under his back on the left side. He should be as snug as the contents of a burrito (or so they say).

I want my own room! Baby should get her own room, if possible, and especially if you are light sleepers. Turn your monitor on the lowest volume and voice-activated setting. You don't need to hear the background noise or every burp and passing of gas. When baby cries, you'll hear her! Place her in a swaddled position on her back in a positioner (a simple one found in most stores) so that she feels secure. Give her the pacifier if she'll take one (pacifiers also discussed later). If she cries, she needs something (oftentimes to burp). Go in and check on her. Pick her up, get out a burp, and place her back down. If you do this from day one, she'll get used to it.

Bassinets are fine if baby is sleeping and feeding better this way. Babies tend to outgrow bassinets by 3-4 months. Co-sleeping works for some parents, but can be potentially dangerous secondary to suffocation risk by rolling on top of your baby. There are infant beds that can be used in the parents' bed. You still need to be careful. Also be aware that after age 4 months, baby can start becoming attached to this co-sleep method and be more difficult to wean into his or her own bed.

Nocturnal Curgles: Baby has her days and nights mixed up! It all blends together when you are allowed to eat and sleep whenever you feel like it. This can be a natural occurrence during the first several weeks after baby is born. After that, it is a good idea to try and get this straightened out. You can keep the house bright and the noise level up during the day, but the main way baby is going to know the difference between day & night is that she feeds more frequently during the day. If it has been more than 3 hours since infant last started a feed, **WAKE HER UP!** Grandma may give you her disapproval, but you can tell her the pediatrician told you so. Keep her awake until she has had a full feed. Try to start each day around the same time. This will be her wake up time when you offer the first feeding of the day. Don't let her fall asleep right afterward. This is how she will know that the daytime is here. After the last feeding of the day, baby will go straight to bed. She will know it is nighttime. Remember, if you work on scheduling her daytime, then

her nighttime behavior will just fall into place. Eventually she will start sleeping longer stretches at night. (* credit the book *BabyWise* here)

Sleepy Sipper: He falls asleep while feeding! So his stomach is only half full but he'd content and he doses off...it is time to wake him up! It is important to get him to feed a complete meal. By doing this, you will guarantee that his stomach is full and avoid grazing throughout the day. First, take off all of his clothes except his diaper. If he slows down his sucking and swallowing, try rubbing the back of his neck and flicking the soles of his feet. Another way to get him sucking at a normal pace again is to tease him by sliding out the nipple gently from his mouth. He'll be awakened and alarmed that it's going somewhere and may start to suck normally again. If he falls asleep, sit him up so that his eyes open and he starts to put his fists in his mouth. Then resume feeding. Also try putting a cool washcloth to his forehead or belly. When he won't resume sucking, lay him flat and take off his diaper. This will usually wake him. I know that seems terribly tedious! At first it may take up to one plus hours to feed your baby. Be patient. T first it may take up to one plus hours to achieve this, but be patient. As baby gets more efficient, feeding will not take a slong.

A Snickety Snack: My baby snacks all day long. A baby who snack feeds takes quick, yummy sips that hold her over for a short while. She doesn't sleep very long. She wakes up and last remembers sucking on a nipple and getting food, and so she wants to eat again. If she keeps this up, you'll have a cranky, overtired baby who can't feed long because she's tired and can't sleep long because she gets hungry. Yikes! Breaking this cycle requires going to the beginning and getting her to stay awake to eat a complete meal.

Set a goal amount of time that you will achieve a successful meal. Let's say that you will try and feed your baby completely in 45-60 minutes maximum. This includes burping and changing (because sometimes you will need to do these things to keep your baby awake and eating more). During this feeding hour, you will keep your baby awake and re-offering the bottle or breast. You'll know that she has

satisfactorily fed after she has had the average 1.5-2 ounces of formula or 20-30 minutes total time of actual sucking and swallowing at the breast. For mothers that are uncertain of how much milk they are making in the beginning, feed 10-15 minutes on each breast, and then offer one ounce of formula. Baby may or may not take this, but at least you offered a complete meal. If you make sure baby gets a full feeding when it's time to eat, then you can take that guesswork out of the equation when she is crying 1 hr later.

If baby is able to stay awake but is still feeding only a small amount during mealtime, she may be losing her appetite because her feeding is being interrupted or the milk is not as she likes it. Try not taking her off of the breast or bottle to burp. Let her come off on her own, and use that as burp time. Some babies' appetites get cut off after they have been taken off to burp. Also, some babies prefer their milk fairly warm. Remember, the milk coming out of mom is close to body temperature. If you're feeding formula, your baby may prefer a different kind. It is probably not a good idea to switch formulas too many times, since this can cause irregular bowel and gas patterns. Consider trying one other formula within the same class, that is milk based or soy based. If that doesn't work try one with "comfort proteins" or one for gassy or fussy babies.

Feeding intervals may vary in infants. In general, if your baby has fed completely during mealtime, then she should be able to go 2.5-3hrs between meals. This is from the start of one feed to the next. If baby appears hungry before that, try to offer her a pacifier or walk around with her in different positions to relieve some gas. Babies will often cry, fuss and put their hands in their mouth when they are hungry, but gas pains can also make a baby think that she is hungry. After you get her to pass some gas or pop out a burp, you may find that the crankiness passes. This also allows for the stomach to empty. Adding milk into the stomach within 1.5-2hrs of the last meal could trap gas bubbles and make a burp painful and difficult to dislodge.

A Nippety Nap: The Hyper-Alert, I-Don't-Want-To-Miss-A-Beat Baby

Babies are born with certain temperaments. I can usually tell, as soon as I meet a baby for the first time, how they interact with and react to their environment.

The “laid back” baby will usually eat when offered milk and look around awhile, nap well, and follow mom’s and dad’s prompts to a tee. He seems content with the developmental stage he is in and the information he is receiving from everything around him.

The “passionate” baby will want to take in and process as much of his environment as possible. He may not eat or nap well. In the beginning it may seem that he doesn’t quite jive with mom’s and dad’s expectations. His eyes are always wide and bright, looking for more to see and do. He is challenging to wind down. He acts as if his little body could do more, he would be doing it.

Babies who struggle with settling down for a nap need some extra guidance. Newborns “should” sleep 18-20 hours of each day on average. If an infant has been awake for 1.5-2 hours, it’s time for a nap. However, if a baby has eaten well and shows signs of crankiness before the 1.5 hours, put him down for a nap then. If you miss this window of opportunity, he can get overtired and even crankier. Then he won’t go down as easily, or if he does go down, he may wake up only 20-30 minutes into his nap. Allowing your baby to fall asleep while feeding could also set you up for a shorter nap (*credit *Babywise*) Aim for 45min-1.5hr naps. It is okay to allow your infant to fuss/cry for several minutes, but if his crying increases it is time to go in and soothe him. Try rocking, patting or burping him. Try the pacifier, or swaddling or some white noise. If you are unable to soothe him back to sleep for a longer nap, then resume your schedule from the start and try to feed at the regular time.

Rise & Shine! Does A Baby Need A Schedule?

Yes, yes and yes!!! After the first few weeks of trying to simply survive and get to know each other, it is time to organize the chaos. This is important for several reasons. For one, it is your duty as a parent, and

will always be, to set boundaries and guideline for your children. Even though they may not act like it, babies and children alike are asking for boundaries. They need these to feel secure, loved and cared for. Overall, they need some direction on what to do and when to do it in order to feel rested, happy and energetic.

How do you do this? As discussed earlier, fill his belly. If you guarantee that your baby feeds completely at each feeding, then everything else will follow suit. If you are nursing, make sure you have offered both sides and make sure baby actively sucks and swallows for at least 20-30minutes total. Later on, it may take him less time. If you are bottle-feeding, ensure that he takes 1.5-2ounces in the beginning, 2-3 ounces by one month, and 3-4 ounces by 2-3 months.

With a full belly, baby should be content, alert, play a while, and when he begins to get cranky, it's time to put him down for a nap. If he does not get cranky, then put him down if he's been up more than 1.5-2hrs. Each meal-play-nap cycle repeats itself every 2.5-3hrs from the beginning of one feed to the beginning of the next feed A great book that summarizes this idea *Baby Wise*. It's a short but helpful read in getting even the most fussy and stubborn baby on a schedule. While some people may find this method controversial, the basics of scheduling are important.

This Sucks! The Pacifier can be your best friend, that is, if your child is also looking for one, too. It is okay to start a pacifier within the first days of life (also see section on nipple confusion). It is acceptable if your baby doesn't like a pacifier. Some studies have shown that if an infant suck on a pacifier while asleep, the risks of SIDS may decrease considerably. Babies love to suck for soothing comfort, especially nursing babies. Oftentimes they may act hungry again, but if you offer the breast or bottle they will feed because it involves sucking. Sucking on the pacifier can also help relieve gas and hiccups. Infants have a

challenging time keeping pacifiers in their mouths. Try out different brands to see which one suits your baby best. Some even have a small weight attached to keep them from popping it out. It's ok to have a pacifier at least until age 6 months. Consider phasing it out by age one.

Agoraphobia: Avoiding Crowds? Newborns are more susceptible to germs, certainly, but that doesn't mean that you have to be cooped up at home. Take him out to the mall, for walks, to a candlelight dinner with your partner, while making sure that you are using hand sanitizer before touching baby. Also make sure that public admirers are not reaching over to pet baby. Most babies (and parents) actually do better when there is a change of scenery at least once a day.

Spoiled Rotten: "Crying It Out" Hold your baby as much as you want to. It is hard to spoil a baby less than 4 months of age! Babies under 4 months of age generally do not have the developmental capabilities to associate reward with certain behavior. They do not seem to be able to self-soothe after long periods of crying until after 4 months of age. So, if your baby is crying, go to her. Check in on her, maybe she just needs your touch or a little rocking to help re-set the elements. (My sons love being patted on their bellies to the point of bouncing their mattress. The vibration is soothing to them.) When she is quiet, try putting her down again. During the day, hold her as much as you feel is appropriate and isn't impinging on your quality of life. After the age of 4 months, it is important to start trying to teach your baby to self-soothe.

Hardware Care: Cord & Circ Care, Two Less Things To Fuss Over Leave the umbilical cord alone! The more rubbing alcohol you apply, the longer it may take for it to fall off. It should fall off within 1-2 weeks; sometimes it takes up to 3 weeks. Try to keep the stump out of the diaper area. After it falls off, wait 3 days before bathing him. If there is an area in the center that doesn't seem to be healing, wait 3-4 days, and if it doesn't dry up, visit your doctor. She may be able to cauterize this granuloma to expedite healing.

If the umbilical cord stump is abruptly pulled off, there will be a lot of bleeding, so don't panic, hold pressure for a full 5-10 minutes (without peeking in between), your baby should not feel any pain.

Your baby should not be significantly irritable after his circumcision. Apply Vaseline with each diaper change for 5-7 days. If you need to clean the area after a bowel movement, wring a soapy wet washrag over the penis, or rinse off with running water & soap. The foreskin around the head of the penis will be swollen and red and have a stuck-on wet scab appearance for up to one week. If there is redness going up the shaft of the penis towards the abdomen, pus seeping out, a fever or excessive pain your child needs a doctor's appointment.

A Nail-Biter: Trimming Frail Fingernails

It is easier to trim the fingernails than file them, because the nails tend to be very soft and merge with the skin of baby's teeny fingers. Use a regular infant nail clipper. After your baby is relaxed, turn her hand so the palm faces up. With your thumb, pull the skin of the tip of her finger back to expose the nail. Then, snip! Doing it this way ensures that you don't nick any skin.

Jerks & Sighs:

Babies have a type of breathing called periodic breathing, where they may have periods of rapid, shallow breathing and distinct pauses all within the same minute. While typically a baby only stops breathing for a few seconds, a larger pause is possible. If the pauses last more than 20 seconds, if she turns blue around the mouth (also check her tongue) or loses consciousness, call 911.

She may seem to shake her arms & legs in a rhythmic fashion. This tends to happen especially when moved or startled. Some babies may even startle themselves. Try holding her arm or leg that is shaking. If it stops, it is not anything to worry about, and less likely a seizure.

Whistle while you Sleep: Noisy Breathing

Babies have small nasal passages and lots of mucus when they are born. When they are lying down for sleep, the inside of their noses get swollen so they sound congested. Since they breathe primarily through their noses until they are 3-4months old, it can be very noticeable. If they sleep ok & feed ok, do not worry! If not, try squirting saline spray in her nostrils, one spray on each side. Then use the nasal aspirator(bulb suction) after 30-60 seconds to try and remove some mucus. Most of the time, however, you will not get out much. If the congestion interferes with baby's normal routine, it is time to see your doctor. Your child could have an obstructed nose, reflux, or a cold. Babies are usually not affected with allergies until they are 4-6months old (even this is very early onset and tends to occur in families that have a moderate to severe allergies).

DIAGRAM ON HOW TO USE THE BULB SUCTION HERE