

# Surviving the Second Night

The first day after your baby is born you may be on a high. You cuddle your baby, baby suckles a bit, he sleeps and you sleep. You have a shower, do your hair and maybe some make-up. Visitors congratulate you, and you re-tell your story to many people.



Then comes the second night! Baby wants to be on your breast the whole time and won't settle. You are exhausted and your high of yesterday is gone. You may be going home in the morning and start to panic that you won't be able to cope.



Someone suggests that maybe you don't have enough milk and your baby is hungry and offers you a bottle. That is not a solution to help you to feel that you can cope with caring for your baby yourself. Your first milk, colostrum, gives your baby what he needs - food, water, immune factors, and in small amounts for his small tummy.

## *What is happening?*

The world is a frightening place for a new baby. There are so many noises and smells and bright lights and each breath on his skin is a new sensation !!!! He is poked and turned over and has painful things done to him. Baby is overwhelmed and wants his nice safe, quiet and warm womb back.

Being at the breast is the nearest he can get to feel safe again. There he can lie still and hear the same heartbeat that he heard in the womb. The sucking helps him to relax and get all the new sensations organised in his mind.



## *What to do?*

Know that this day two behaviour is normal. It doesn't mean that you do not have enough milk. Don't fight it. Get into a comfortable position and cuddle your baby skin to skin. When baby falls asleep gently move your nipple out of his mouth and let baby use your breast as a pillow. Check that you can see baby's nose and mouth and they are not buried in your breast. Then relax. After about 20 minutes baby is in a deeper sleep and can be moved if needed. Move too soon and baby wants to start over again to get to feeling safe.

Baby can feel unsettled and scared at other times when in a new place or handled too much. Quiet, calm, cuddling can help baby and mother then too. Your baby sucked his hands in the womb so make sure they are unwrapped so he can find them.



Learn your baby's signs of when he is tired, overwhelmed or hungry. Get to know what helps him to settle. See the BFHI Link parent handout Issues 9, 33 and 50 for more ideas.

**This is general information. Discuss your specific needs with your midwife, nurse, lactation consultant or doctor.**

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