

Understanding Your Newborn Baby's Behavior

Who

Pregnant women in their third trimester of pregnancy. Classes with 2-20 participants.

Why

Pregnant mothers, especially first time mothers, may have little knowledge of normal infant behavior and unrealistic expectations about newborn sleep patterns and reasons for crying. Focus groups of WIC mothers revealed that many interpreted their infants' crying and waking up as signs of hunger. Thus, mothers believed their infants' were still hungry, even if mom recently fed baby. These beliefs led to supplementation of breastfeeding with formula, early weaning, and early introduction of solids in order to get the infant to either stop crying or sleep longer during the night.

Educating women prenatally about infant sleep patterns and reasons for crying, and providing tools to help them see solutions to common concerns, will help mothers have more realistic expectations of normal baby behavior. Parents will learn to respond appropriately to their infant's needs, and recognize hunger cues. Educating WIC participants about baby behaviors will lead to longer duration of breastfeeding and can help parents avoid over feeding and delay introduction of solid foods.

Time

25-30 minutes

Set-Up

Chairs set up in a circle or semi-circle

Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will:

- Identify the differences between light and deep sleep
Note: Your “Healthy Sleep: For You and Your Baby” handout refers to active and quiet sleep, but the CA WIC materials refer to light and deep sleep. For this training, these terms will be used interchangeably (active = light and quiet = deep).
 - Discuss why infants need to wake up often
 - Learn to recognize hunger cues
 - Compare ways to calm a crying newborn
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Lesson Overview

1. Welcome & Warm Up
 2. Sleeping Like a Baby
 3. Light Sleep and Deep Sleep
 4. Waking Up
 5. Hunger Cues
 6. Calming a Crying Baby
 7. Closing
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Materials

Materials Needed:

- Refer to the Materials Checklist on pages 19-20

Provided by Agency:

- Flip Chart
 - Markers
 - Paper/Pencils/Pens
 - DVD player
 - Items for Waking Up activity - basket, thermometer, baby blanket (not a receiving blanket), and “belly balls” or an object representing the size of a newborn’s fist (options: ping pong ball, large walnut), or other culturally appropriate items.
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Getting Ready

1. Post posters:
 - Class Agenda
 - “What Does It Mean to Sleep Like a Baby?”
 - “If Your Newborn Is Hungry”
2. Set up DVD player
3. Gather one of each handout for each participant

1. Welcome & Warm-Up 1-5 minutes

“Welcome to today’s group about understanding your newborn baby. My name is _____ and I will be leading this discussion. We will be talking about newborn behavior, so you know what to expect after your baby is born. Understanding your baby better can help you feel less stressed and more confident in caring for your newborn.”

Show Class Agenda Poster (optional).

Poster: Agenda

“Today we will:

Objectives

- *Identify the differences between active and quiet sleep*
- *Discuss why your infant needs to wake up often*
- *Learn to recognize hunger cues*
- *Compare ways to calm a crying newborn.”*

Allow 3-4 minutes for the following activity. If the class is large, consider using Option 2.

Option 1: *“Let’s start by finding out how many of you are new moms or dads and how many of you are experienced moms or dads (or grandparents). Let’s go around the room and have each of you introduce yourself and tell us if this is your first baby or if you have other children.”*

Option 2: *“By a show of hands, how many of you are new moms or dads? How many of you have other children?”*

“Thank you for participating.”

2. Sleeping Like a Baby

2-3 minutes

Poster:

*What Does it
Mean to Sleep
Like a Baby?*

“Let’s talk about newborn babies and how they sleep.”

“When you hear someone say, ‘I slept like a baby last night!’ what do you think they mean? (pause) What does it mean to sleep like a baby?”

Point to poster: “What Does it Mean to Sleep Like a Baby?”

Give participants time to shout out responses. Affirm responses.

Possible responses you may hear from participants:

- Sleep a lot
- Sleep peacefully, relaxed
- Sleep soundly
- Not easily awakened
- Deep sleep
- Sleep with no worries

(These responses show unrealistic expectations about how babies sleep which we will address in the class.)

“Many people think that babies will sleep like the baby in the poster, peacefully and soundly. Is this true? Do babies really sleep peacefully and soundly all the time? What do you think? Wait for responses.

As you start distributing a copy of the handout “Healthy Sleep: For You and Your Baby” to each family, say:

“Before we talk about what the research has to say about how babies really sleep, take a minute to look at this handout.”

Give participants a minute to look through the handout.

3. Active Sleep and Quiet Sleep

7 minutes

“Please open the handout on sleep.”

“Your baby needs to go through periods of both light and deep sleep. We can also call this active sleep and quiet sleep. Both types of sleep are important for your baby’s health.”

“I need two volunteers to read the descriptions of active sleep and quiet sleep?”

Pause and wait 5 seconds.

If nobody responds, say:

“Follow along as I read about active and quiet sleep.”

Facilitator reads from the handout.

“Let’s watch a quick video to see the differences between these two types of sleep. First, let’s watch two babies in light sleep.”

Show **Light Sleep** video clip.

“What did you see the babies doing during light or active sleep?”

Give participants a minute to respond and affirm accordingly. Supply answers that weren’t given.

- *Moved a little every now and then*
- *Eyes twitched or moved under eyelids – dreaming*
- *Face or body twitched*
- *Smiled*

“During active sleep, your baby is dreaming. Dreaming is important because during this time your baby’s brain is very active. Blood flow increases to the brain, supplying needed nutrients. This helps your baby’s brain grow and develop.”

“Now, we will watch two babies in deep or quiet sleep.”

Show **Deep Sleep** video clip

“What did you see the babies doing during deep or quiet sleep?”

Possible answers:

- *Didn’t move very much*
- *Arms and legs were relaxed (floppy)*
- *Hard to wake*

Add any answers that aren’t given.

3. Active Sleep and Quiet Sleep (continued)

“During deep sleep, your baby’s brain and body are resting. Both types of sleep are important for your baby’s health.”

“Newborn babies fall asleep in light sleep. Some newborns will wake up easily if you lay them down while in light sleep. Wait for signs of deep sleep before laying your baby down.”

“What questions do you have about how young babies sleep?”

Wait for a response.

4. Waking up

3 minutes

Basket of objects for facilitator:

- Blanket
- Thermometer
- Belly Balls or Ping Pong Ball or Large Walnut
- Or other culturally appropriate items

“Many parents will say that their baby waking up at night is the hardest part about being a new parent. Babies are born with instincts to help them survive. Waking up keeps them safe and healthy. Waking up at night is normal. Let’s talk about why the ability to wake up often is important for young babies.”

“Take a moment to think about why a baby may wake up during the night.”

“I have three objects that represent some reasons why babies might wake up.”

Hold basket up as you are speaking.

“Who would like to take an object and help me with this activity?”

Pass around the basket to the volunteers and ask them to each choose an object. Ask for each person to hold up their object (one at a time) and ask:

“What do you think the (Insert name of object) has to do with why a baby might wake up during the night?”

Wait for responses. Affirm and add new information —refer to FAQs for help responding to unexpected answers.

Blanket:

- I am too hot or too cold.
“Babies will wake up if they are too hot or too cold. If your baby is sweating, he may be dressed too warmly or covered with too many blankets.”

Thermometer:

- I am sick.
“Babies sometimes wake up when they don’t feel well. If you notice changes in your baby’s sleep or behavior and are concerned, call your doctor.”

Belly Ball, Ping Pong Ball, Walnut representing stomach size:

- My tummy is tiny and I need to wake up.
“Remember, your baby’s stomach is about the size of his fist. Babies wake up often to eat because their stomachs can only hold a small amount each time they feed. It’s normal for newborns to eat 10-12 times in 24 hours.”

4.
Waking up
(continued)

“So now we know why it is important for young babies to wake up frequently during the night. Babies wake up more easily in active sleep and can let you know when they need your help. Waking up not only keeps your baby safe and healthy, it is normal.”

“Remember, doctors recommend that babies are put on their backs to sleep. As your baby gets older, he will sleep for longer periods of time and wake up less often during the night.”

“What questions do you have about babies waking up?”

Wait for a response before giving or affirming answer.

“Another concern that many new parents have is how to know when their newborns need to be fed.”

5. Hunger Cues

5 minutes

Poster:

*If Your
Newborn Is
Hungry*

“Newborns need to be fed often.”

Refer to “If Your Newborn Is Hungry” poster and “Why Do Babies Cry?” handout.

“Look at the poster and inside of the Why Do Babies Cry?” handout.

Facilitator can demonstrate with own body or point out on the poster the hunger cues. A key point to make is that the bending of arms and legs is **towards** the body, not away.

“When your newborn is hungry, he may:

- *Keep his hands near his mouth*
- *Bend his arms and legs*
- *Make sucking noises*
- *Pucker his lips*
- *Search for the nipple (root)”*

“Babies will usually give you several of these cues at one time.”

“Responding to hunger cues early can prevent your baby from becoming too upset. It will be much easier to feed your baby when he is calm.”

“Watching and responding to hunger cues early can prevent some crying!?”

Let’s take a look at a video of a newborn baby that is crying because of hunger.”

5. Hunger Cues (continued)

Show **Hunger Cues** video clip.

“What hunger cues did you see this baby giving?”

Refer to “If Your Newborn Is Hungry” poster for answers—baby displays all hunger cues listed on poster.

“Watching and responding to hunger cues early can prevent some crying.”

“Now let’s look at another video of a crying baby that is not hungry.”

Show **Crying Baby** video clip.

“What did you see this baby doing?”

Wait for possible responses.

“This baby is not showing any hunger cues. You may have noticed her jerky movements, tense muscles, and stretched out arms and fingers. When a baby shows these cues, she’s telling you she needs something to be different.”

“We can talk more about cues after your baby is born.”

“Although it is stressful to hear a baby cry, crying is normal for all babies. It is one way they communicate with you.”

“Let’s talk about ways to calm a crying baby.”

6. Calming a Crying Baby

5 minutes

“Let’s look at “Why Do Babies Cry” again.”

“Calming a crying baby may be as simple as changing her diaper or feeding her if she shows hunger cues.”

“There may be times when you have checked everything and your baby still cries. When this happens move to Steps on back of handout.”

Ask for a volunteer to read the steps on the back page.

“Who would like to read the steps on the back page for us?”

Pause and wait for a volunteer to read. If nobody volunteers, facilitator reads.

“In this next video clip, we will see a mom trying to calm her crying baby.”

Play **Overstimulated Baby** video clip.

“Turn to your neighbor and share what you saw this mom doing.”

Allow 15-30 seconds for participants to share with one another.

“Was she able to calm her baby?”

Wait for responses.

“No. Mom was doing too much.”

Affirm: *“Trying too many different things all at once can overwhelm your baby and make him more upset.”*

“Now let’s take a look at how other babies were calmed by repeating the same action over and over.”

Play **Calming Your Baby** video clip.

“What was different about how these babies were calmed compared to the baby in the previous video we watched?”

Wait for responses.

“These babies were held close and calmed by repeating the same action over and over. Sometimes babies clam down right away, others may take longer.”

**6.
Calming a
Crying Baby
(continued)**

“What other things can you try to calm a crying baby?”

Wait for responses.

“Remember to be patient. Calming a baby takes time. Sticking with the same action for several minutes can be the secret to success.”

“If your baby continues to cry or becomes more upset, try something else from the suggestions in your handout to calm your baby.”

“What questions do you have about calming a crying baby?”

Wait for responses.

7.
Closing
and
DVD
Distribution

3-5 minutes

*“Having a baby is a very exciting time. **The first six to eight weeks can be the hardest on parents.**”*

“As you get to know your baby, you will recognize what he is trying to tell you and be able to respond to his needs. As he gets older things are going to get easier.”

“Today we:

- Identified the differences between active and quiet sleep*
- Discussed why infants need to wake up often*
- Learned how to recognize hunger cues, and*
- Compared ways to calm a crying newborn”*

“Turn to your neighbor and share one thing that you want to remember when your baby arrives.”

Pause and wait 15-30 seconds.

“Who would like to share?”

Pause and wait for responses.

“In addition to the handouts we covered in class, we have an optional DVD for you to take home. This DVD includes more clips of babies like what we just saw in class and additional information about baby behavior to share with your family and friends. Sharing this information can help everyone feel more confident and less stressed!”

Hold up a sample of the DVD “Getting to Know Your Baby”.

“If you don’t think you will use the DVD, we encourage you to go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eX2ijdLnJJU> to learn more about baby behavior.”

**7.
Closing
and
DVD
Distribution
(continued)**

Distribute the DVD to those that want it.

“Thank you for participating today!”

Attachments

Frequently Asked Questions for Prenatal Class

Participants often have questions that aren't addressed in the class outline or handouts. These "frequently asked questions" will help the staff answer participant's questions that may come up during class discussions. Refer to *handout* for related information.

1. What is the average length of time that babies sleep?

Newborns sleep about 14 to 16 hours in a 24 hour period, but not all at one time. At 2 to 4 weeks of age young babies are able to sleep 2 to 4 hours at one time. By 6 to 8 weeks babies sleep more during the night time as they are awake more during the day. By 3 months of age babies are able to sleep up to 4 hours at one time and by 6 months babies may be able to sleep up to 6 hours at one time.

2. When will babies sleep through the night?

Babies sleep for longer stretches and wake less often during the night. Every baby is different, but 6-month-olds are mature enough to sleep up to 6-hours at one time. A 6-8 hour stretch of sleep is considered "sleeping through the night." Keep in mind that each participant may have a different definition of "night". Remind participants that even if their baby sleeps through the night for a few days or weeks, changes in the baby's routine, sickness, growth spurts, or other things may cause night waking to occur again for a short time.

3. How long does it take a baby to go into deep or quiet sleep?

Newborns fall asleep in light or active sleep. About 20-30 minutes later, they go into deep or quiet sleep. Every baby is different, so look for signs of deep sleep to be sure. As babies get older, they will go from light sleep to deep sleep more quickly. By 4 months of age, many babies fall asleep in deep sleep.

4. Do I have to lay my baby on his back to sleep?

Doctors recommend that babies be put on their backs to sleep to help prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Young infants who sleep on their stomachs are at an increased risk for SIDS.

5. Is it OK for my baby to sleep in my bed with me?

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies sleep in the same room as their parent(s) but on a separate sleep surface.

6. What should I do when my baby wakes up in the middle of the night and won't go back to sleep?

Acknowledge that this is difficult for parents but is normal baby behavior. During the first 6 weeks, a newborn's sleep will be unpredictable, and he will not know the difference between day time and night time. Babies wake during the night because they need something. Find out what your baby needs (Is he hungry? Does he need a diaper change? Is he too hot or too cold? Is he uncomfortable?) and take care of his needs. Keeping the lights low while you care for your baby will help you both get back to sleep more quickly. After your baby's needs are met, speak softly, rock him gently and encourage him to go back to sleep. Your baby will wake less as he gets older.

7. Why would you want to wake a sleeping baby?

A parent may need to wake a young baby who is not waking to feed often enough. Call your doctor if you are concerned that your baby is sleeping too much.

8. Is it bad to wake a baby who is in deep or quiet sleep?

It is not harmful to wake a baby who is in deep sleep. If you need to wake your baby use a variety of sounds and touches. Be patient, it may take several minutes to wake a baby that is in deep sleep. (p. 6)

9. When I lay my baby down and she wakes up right away, is it because she is used to being held all of the time?

Remember that newborn babies fall asleep in light or active sleep. Because of this, they may startle and wake up when laid down while still in light sleep. This is normal. Wait for signs of deep or quiet sleep before laying your baby down.

10. Is it good to let babies "cry it out" sometimes? Is it good for their lungs? Is it okay to let my baby cry herself to sleep? Am I spoiling my baby by picking her up when she cries?

You may have heard many things about letting babies cry. Babies cry to communicate that they need something. Responding to a baby's crying is simply taking care of her needs. Research shows that when parents respond to their babies' cries, babies develop confidence that their world is safe and secure. You can't spoil a baby by responding to her needs.

11. What do I do if I can't get my baby to stop crying?

Babies cry to tell parents that they need their help. Try to figure out why your baby is crying and respond to her needs. If your baby continues to cry after you have taken care of her needs, hold her close and repeat the same action over and over, such as gently rocking or swaying. Be patient; calming a crying baby takes time. If you start to feel angry or overwhelmed, lay your baby down in a safe place for a few minutes and take a break. If you think your baby is crying too much, contact your baby's doctor.

12. What is a comfortable room temperature for my baby?

If the room temperature is too hot or too cold for the parent, it may be too hot or too cold for the baby. If your baby is sweaty, he may be dressed too warmly or in too many blankets. Dress your baby in as many layers as you are wearing. Call your doctor if you have questions or concerns.

13. How do I know if my baby is sick?

Every baby is different and may show a wide variety of symptoms when sick. Common signs of illness include the following: fever (feel hot), skin color changes (very red cheeks, pale), increased crying, a change in sleep pattern, wheezing, problems breathing, blood in stools, diarrhea, vomiting, coughing, and/or a runny nose. There may be other symptoms. Call your baby's doctor if you think your baby may be sick or call 911 if you need help right away.

14. Is it good to swaddle your baby?

There may be certain circumstances when swaddling is appropriate for very young infants. Swaddling may help calm very young babies, but swaddling older babies is discouraged. Swaddling limits your baby's ability to move his body and gain strength and coordination. It also makes it hard for your baby to use his body to give you cues and limits your ability to read his cues.

15. Can I use a bouncy seat or swing to help calm my baby?

The best way to calm a crying baby is to hold your baby close to you and repeat the same words or actions over and over. Bouncy seats and swings also provide repetitive motions that can soothe babies. However, many seats and swings now come with sounds and music as well. Too many sounds can overwhelm your baby. It may be helpful to turn off the music and turn the swing to face the wall. Although this may seem boring to an adult, it is actually calming to a baby. Be careful not to overuse this equipment. In order to grow and develop, babies need time to move their bodies freely in a safe place.

Prenatal Group Education Materials Checklist

Item	Description	Location	
<p>Order Limit: 3 per clinic</p> <p>DVD: Prenatal Class Clips: <i>Understanding Your Newborn Baby's Behavior</i></p> <p>Item No. 961-972</p>	<p>This DVD contains clips used during prenatal group education and is for class use only.</p>	<p>WIC Staff: Order through myFULFILLMENT.wa.gov (WIC→Nutrition Education Materials→Baby Behavior Materials)</p>	<p>Non-WIC Staff: Request additional copies from Ashley.Sutherland@doh.wa.gov</p>
<p>Participant DVD: Getting to Know Your Baby (English/Spanish)</p> <p>Item No. 961-969</p>	<p>This DVD can be offered to participants at the end of prenatal group education to take home and share with family members.</p> <p>This DVD is NOT used as part of prenatal group education.</p>	<p>WIC Staff: Order through myFULFILLMENT.wa.gov (WIC→Nutrition Education Materials→Baby Behavior Materials)</p>	<p>Non-WIC Staff: Request additional copies from Ashley.Sutherland@doh.wa.gov</p>
		<p>Link to "Getting to Know Your Baby" YouTube video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eX2iidLnIJ</p>	
<p>Lesson Plan: <i>Understanding Your Newborn Baby's Behavior</i></p> <p>Item No. 961-975</p>	<p>Lesson plan for prenatal group education.</p>	<p>Baby Behavior Materials</p>	
<p>Poster:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Class Agenda: Understanding Your Newborn Baby's Behavior</i> <p>Item No. 961-980 – English/Spanish</p>	<p>Class visuals</p>	<p>Baby Behavior Materials</p>	

Item	Description	Location	
<p>Order Limit: 3 sets of posters (4) per clinic</p> <p>Posters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>If Your Newborn is Hungry</i> <p>Item No. 961-967 – English/Spanish</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>What Does it Mean to Sleep Like a Baby?</i> <p>Item No. 961-968 – English/Spanish</p>	Class visuals	<p>WIC Staff: Order through myFULFILLMENT.wa.gov (WIC→Nutrition Education Materials→Baby Behavior Materials)</p>	<p>Non-WIC Staff: Request additional copies from Ashley.Sutherland@doh.wa.gov</p>
<p><i>Why Do Babies Cry?</i></p> <p>Item No. 960-316</p>	Participant handout used in class activity	<p>WIC Staff: Order through myFULFILLMENT.wa.gov (WIC→Nutrition Education Materials→Baby Behavior Materials)</p>	<p>Non-WIC Staff: Order through the H.E.R.E website</p>
<p><i>Understanding Your Baby's Cues</i></p> <p>Item No. 960-317</p>	Participant handout used in class activity	<p>WIC Staff: Order through myFULFILLMENT.wa.gov (WIC→Nutrition Education Materials→Baby Behavior Materials)</p>	<p>Non-WIC Staff: Order through the H.E.R.E website</p>
<p><i>Healthy Sleep: For You and Your Baby</i></p> <p>Item No. 960-318</p>	Participant handout used in class activity	<p>WIC Staff: Order through myFULFILLMENT.wa.gov (WIC→Nutrition Education Materials→Baby Behavior Materials)</p>	<p>Non-WIC Staff: Order through the H.E.R.E website</p>

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