

1. Introduction

“Welcome to “Understanding Your Baby: Infant Behavior.” My name is _____ and I will be leading today’s class.

Today we are going to talk about how newborns behave, so you’ll feel more ready for those first few weeks at home.

I would like to start out by going around the room, having **each of you introduce yourself** and **let us know if this is your first baby or if you have other children.**”*(Participants share. Thank them for their participation.)*

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2. 14 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding

(optional video)

(SHOW VIDEO-16 minutes)

We’re going to get started by watching a video called “14 Steps to Successful Breastfeeding.”

(Participants watch video. 16 minutes.)



What questions do you have about what you’ve just seen? (Pause 5 seconds.)

WIC is here to help you get breastfeeding off to a good start. Please stay after class if you would like more information or have any questions.

Just as a mom and her baby learn to breastfeed together, they also learn to communicate with each other. At first, it may be hard to understand what your baby is trying to tell you, but it doesn’t take long for you and your baby to develop your own special language. Let’s talk a little bit about how to better understand your baby.

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3. Newborn Behavior – Cues: Part 1



From what you've seen or heard, how do mothers know if their babies are getting enough to eat? (Pause 5 seconds to wait for responses. Make a list of responses on a flip chart or white board.)

Sounds like mothers use **lots of ways** to tell if their babies get enough to eat. Sometimes they use their **babies' behavior**. For example, some parents think babies wake up at night only because they are hungry, but babies wake up for many reasons. Sometimes babies wake up because they are too cold or hot or even because they need to breathe. Some moms also think that the only way to know if their babies have had enough to eat is to see them fall asleep afterwards, but that is not always true either.

Another common myth is that when babies cry a lot after a feeding that it means they are still hungry, but babies cry for **many** reasons. We will talk about a few of those reasons later in this class. Sometimes it is hard to understand your baby needs. Because babies can't talk, babies try to show us what they need **by using their bodies and their voices**.

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At first, they can't tell us very much. They can just tell us **if they are comfortable** and want us to feed them or play with them **OR if they are uncomfortable** and need something to be different. Some examples are...

(Briefly review the poster "Baby's Talking." You may use script below or read directly off the poster.)

Here is a baby who wants to be near her mom. Her face is relaxed and she is smiling. On the other hand, this is a baby that needs a break or something different. He is turning his head and body away from his dad. Here is a handout with more information about "I want to be near you" and "I need a break" cues.



(Pass out "Understand baby cues" handout)

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4. Newborn Behavior – Cues: Part 2

As we mentioned earlier, babies cry for **many reasons**—not just because they are hungry. Let’s talk a little bit about **why babies cry**.

Hungry babies will do **many things** to tell you they are hungry. **Sometimes they cry, but not always**. If babies are crying but not doing **all of the other things** that mean hunger, you should probably **look for something else** to make the baby feel more comfortable.

Babies cry for many reasons other than hunger. They could be hot, cold, lonely, or tired. They could be over stimulated from too much noise or too many people or lights.



Who would like to volunteer to read a few words? (Pass out “Coping with Crying” handout to the group and have them follow along. Show volunteer section to read-“Is the baby hungry” on the page “How to Know What Your Baby Needs.” If no one volunteers, instructor should read the section.)

As you can see, crying won’t always mean your baby is hungry. Babies are hard to understand at first, but it gets easier.

It can also be hard to understand why babies wake up a lot. Your baby’s sleep patterns (sleeping or waking up) are a behavior (one of the ways they react to what’s going on around them.) How babies sleep and wake up also affects how moms feed them. Let’s talk a little more about how infants sleep and why it can be hard on new parents.

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5. Newborn Behavior — Sleep

(*Use poster: “Baby’s Sleeping: Let’s Guess”)

Babies will wake up at night and try to tell parents that **they need something**.

That can be **hard on parents**. But it only lasts a short time! By about 4 months old, your baby will wake up a lot less.



From what you’ve heard or seen, how many times would you guess that your newborn baby will wake up at night during the first month? (Wait for responses. Thank everyone who participates. Write responses on poster.)



How many times would you guess that your baby will wake up at 2 months? At 6 months? (Wait for responses. Thank everyone who participates. Write responses on poster.)

Wow, there are a lot of ideas about how many times babies wake up at night. Every baby is different but research shows that most babies wake up:

3-4 times per night by 1 month old

2-3 times per night by 2 months old

0-1 time per night by 6 months old

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So, yes, babies do wake up at night, but maybe not as much as moms might think. It might feel like your baby wakes up a lot more than this, especially when you are tired and waking up in the middle of the night. IF your baby wakes up a lot more than this on a regular basis, talk to someone at WIC. We are here to help!

Parents might think that babies wake up **only if they are hungry**. They do wake up sometimes to eat but there are **many reasons why babies wake up**. As we talked about before, sometimes babies wake up because they are too cold or hot or even because they need to breathe.

Babies sleep differently than adults. When babies sleep, part of the time they **sleep lightly—we call this active sleep—**and part of the time, they **sleep deeply—which we call quiet sleep**.

Listen as I read this true story of a night in the life of a new mom, Jennifer, and her 2 month old daughter, Lily. (Read through the story while showing the picture that goes with each section.)

The good news is that as babies get older, they start to sleep more like we do. By 4 months, babies start sleeping in quiet sleep and they don't wake up as easily. They also sleep for longer stretches of time.

Let's practice what you just learned...

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- ❖ **The 2 types of infant sleep that we talked about in the story are shown on this poster.**
- ❖ **One type is Light Sleep or "Active Sleep" and the other is Deep Sleep or "Quiet Sleep."**
- ❖ **I have 8 cards in my hand. Each card describes something about either light sleep or deep sleep.**
- ❖ **Now I will put you into groups and divide the cards between you.**
- ❖ **Using this handout as a cheat sheet (pass out "Healthy sleep"), place your cards up on the board under the type of sleep they describe.**

(Group participants into pairs of 2, or groups of 3, depending on class size. Divide cards evenly among the groups. Review answers when all cards are placed up on the poster.)

You can see how different the two different types of sleep are when you look at this poster (*show poster with answers posted*). Babies will switch between these two types of sleep many times throughout the night. Remember that young babies start sleeping in active or light sleep, so wait about 20 minutes before you put them down to sleep until they are in a deeper sleep (quiet sleep). And again, by about 4 months, babies start sleeping in quiet sleep and they don't wake up as easily.

 Since dreaming and waking are so important for babies, what things might you do to make waking up with your newborn easier for you and your family? (Pause 5 seconds to wait for responses.)

*You can help your baby dream. You can put your baby down on his or her back to sleep. You can breastfeed your baby. Breastfed babies are smarter because they spend more time in active sleep where they dream. You've all heard that putting your baby down on his or her back to sleep is good, right? Putting babies on their backs is an important way to protect them from SIDS.

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6. Closing- Changes as Your Baby Grows

It gets easier to understand and care for older babies but you will probably still have lots of questions. After your baby is born, we will have a class available to help you understand your baby's cues and sleeping patterns. Knowing more about these things will help you continue to breastfeed as your baby gets older. WIC can even help you keep breastfeeding if you decide to go back to work.

In pairs, pick a card out of the basket:

- ❖ Share one thing you remember from today's class about the topic listed on your card.
- ❖ How will you use this information after your baby is born?
(Give participants about 1 minute to discuss, then ask...)

Who would like to share with the group? (Pause for responses)

Thank you for participating in today's class. Have a great day!

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Understanding Your Baby: Newborn Behavior

--Class Script--