HELPING PARENTS DEAL WITH LACK OF SLEEP

Questions to Ask

- How many times does the baby wake up per night?
- How much does the baby sleep during the day?
- Where does the baby sleep?
- What else is in the room with the baby (noise, TV, lights, etc)?
- Has the baby been sick?
- Has any thing changed in the baby’s routine?

Things to Try

- Explain how infants’ sleep patterns change
- Ask parents to keep a sleep diary for a couple of nights
- Use light/dark cycles (no TV, lights, etc)
- If baby falls asleep in arms, wait a few minutes to put the baby down
- Encourage parents to get help with other responsibilities in the early weeks
- Encourage tired parents to take the time to wake up fully before getting a crying baby (to prevent abuse)
- Encourage resting as much as possible
- Encourage parents to get someone to watch the baby while they nap

Average number of times babies wake up between 10pm and 6am

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>3 - 4 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>2 - 3 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>1 - 2 times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>0 - 1 time</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

It may be helpful to remind parents that the sleepless nights won’t last forever.

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WARNING SIGNS: WHEN TO REFER

You may come in contact with a mother or baby who needs extra help. The situations below may indicate the need for a referral to a doctor or other qualified health professional.

Newborn

- Mother reports very loose stools for 6 – 8 diaper changes
- Mother reports that the baby has no wet diapers for 6 hours or more
- Changes in the baby’s skin coloration
- Noticeable changes in infant temperament
- Baby is refusing to feed, or has missed several feedings

3 Months and Older

- Significant changes in appetite
- Dramatic changes in sleep patterns
- Baby falls below 20% of ideal weight-height ratio
- Baby is rarely or never interested in interaction with caregivers
- Baby has a barking seal like cough
- Baby appears to be ill or in pain
- Baby cries excessively or cannot be consoled
- Baby will not look at or respond to faces

When in doubt, ask your supervisor or an appropriate staff member

Mother

- Mother displays lack of interest in baby
- Mother has bouts of prolonged inexplicable crying
- Mother expresses fear or feelings that she will harm the baby
- Mother reports excessive anger or irritability
- Mother expresses guilt regarding presence of the baby