

# Activities to help you help your new baby

Remember human touch is the  
most important medicine  
for your baby!

# What are your baby's cues and how do they help you know what he needs?

- \* Cues are signals from your baby that tell you how he feels and what he needs.
- \* Some cues tell you that your baby is ready to interact (be active with you). Other cues tell you that your baby needs a break or to rest.
- \* To figure out what the cues mean, look at what your baby is doing and what's happening around him.
- \* Once you've learned to read your baby's cues, you can better respond to his needs.

# What cues tell you that your baby wants to interact?

- \* These cues show that your baby is ready to interact:
- \* She's awake and alert.
- \* She brings her hands or feet together, or she stays in a softly tucked position with her arms and legs tucked up into the middle of her body.
- \* She grabs at someone's finger or an object.
- \* She puts her hand on her ear, the side of her face or near her mouth.
- \* She moves smoothly (not jumpy or startled).
- \* Her eyes are open wide, and they try to follow a moving face or object.

# Here are some ways to interact with your baby when she's ready:

- \* Hold her.
- \* Talk to her, read her a story or sing a song to her.
- \* Give her a bath.
- \* Change her diaper.
- \* Feed her.

# What cues tell you that your baby needs a break from activity?

These cues show that your baby needs to take a break:

- \* He feels stiff like he's tense or limp like he's really tired.
- \* He stretches out his arms and spreads his fingers wide apart. When he does this with his fingers, it's called splaying.
- \* He squirms, startles or twitches more than usual. He won't make eye contact, and he turns his head away.
- \* He arches his back, makes a fist or pushes his hand out like he's telling you to stop.
- \* His skin gets pale.
- \* He frowns or is fussing and crying.
- \* Spits up or chokes

# Here are some things you can do when your baby needs a break:

- \* Hold him. You may want to use a containment hold.
  - \* This is when you gently hold your baby's head and her tummy, bottom or feet. Ask the nurse to show you how.
- \* Talk softly to him.
- \* Place your hand lightly on his tummy or chest, or let him hold your finger.

# A few more tips to try when your baby needs a break:

- \* Swaddle him snugly, but not too tight. Swaddle means you wrap your baby in a thin blanket so that it covers most of his body below the neck.
- \* If he uses a pacifier, give him one.
- \* Put a rolled blanket or diaper near his feet so he can press against it.



# Feeling like you tried everything...

*Sometimes doing these things may be too much for your baby.*

*If nothing is working , put him in his bed in a quiet place with dim lights. If you can't dim the lights, shade your baby's eyes with your hand.*

# We are here to help

- \* What are some comfort measure that your baby likes?
- \* This can be a tough question!
  - \* **If you have a hard time figuring out some comfort measures for your baby take these steps**
    1. Review the content on uMAT-R about Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)
    2. You can also send a message to your uMAT-R coach who may be able to help you answer this question.

# Thank you March of Dimes

- \* We thank the March of Dimes for providing this helpful information.
- \* <https://www.marchofdimes.org/complications/learning-your-baby-s-cues.aspx>