

Waking Your Sleeping Baby

SAINT BARNABAS MEDICAL CENTER
NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT

The best time to do hand hugs or skin-to-skin care is when your baby is awake or in a light sleep. You can tell your baby is sleeping lightly or is drowsy because he/she may:

- open his or her eyes occasionally, blink, or have rapid eye movements
- have irregular breathing
- have facial twitching, grimacing, or sucking movements

A baby who is in a deep sleep will have:

- smooth, regular breathing
- eyes closed with no movement
- relaxed facial muscles

We realize that sometimes you may have limited time to spend with your baby. Please consider using the following steps to wake your sleeping baby in a supportive way.

- Dim the lights before removing the giraffe incubator cover.
- Approach the giraffe incubator using a soft voice before opening the port hole doors.
- Protect your baby's eyes from direct light using your hand, a scent cloth or a cloth diaper.
- Use a firm but gentle touch to wake your baby. Wait until your baby appears awake before proceeding with a hand hug, breast milk swabbing, temperature taking or diaper changing.
- Your nurse will assist you with skin-to-skin (kangaroo) care.
- Withdraw your touch gradually to prevent startling your baby.

If you have any further questions, please ask your nurse or doctor.