

Periodic Breathing of the Newborn – MomTalks Physician Script

You might notice that your baby has very funny breathing patterns when he is asleep. There is a specific pattern of breathing that is normal in newborns, called periodic breathing. This is when the baby breathes normally and then you notice that he is breathing really fast for a few seconds, sometimes up to one minute! After the fast breathing, you will notice that he stops breathing for a little while, too. This can be very alarming to parents and understandably so! The key to knowing that your baby is doing periodic breathing and does not have something more serious going on is to recognize that the baby does not look like he is scared or working very hard to breathe. Usually, the baby is acting pretty much the same as always, he is just breathing rapidly. When he stops breathing, again, he is not struggling or looking different in any way, he has just paused in his breathing. Also, babies who are doing periodic breathing will resume normal breathing on their own, without you doing anything to help them. This type of breathing occurs because the part of the brain that controls breathing is still developing.

If the baby turns blue, looks like he is gasping for air, or if he stops breathing without the associated fast, shallow breathing pattern, you should call 911 or bring him to the hospital immediately. If you have any questions about your baby's breathing, don't hesitate to call your pediatrician.

Periodic Breathing of the Newborn – MomTalks Take Home Points

1. Periodic breathing is when a baby breathes really fast and shallow for a little while and then stops breathing for a little while.
2. The baby resumes normal breathing on its own.
3. Periodic breathing is normal in newborns
4. The baby does not change color or look like he is struggling to breathe.
5. If your baby changes color or looks like he is having a hard time breathing, immediately call 911 or take him to the hospital!