



Newborn Smell & Touch

Just as babies prefer certain patterns and sounds, they are typically very particular about tastes and smells. They will breathe deeply to catch a whiff of milk, vanilla, banana, or sugar, but will turn up their nose at the smell of alcohol or vinegar.

By the end of their first week, if they're nursing, they'll turn toward their mother's breast pad but will ignore the pads of other nursing mothers. This radar-like system helps direct them at feeding times and warn them away from substances that could harm them.



Babies are equally sensitive to touch and the way you handle them. They'll nestle into a soft piece of flannel or satin, but pull away from scratchy burlap or coarse sandpaper. When they are stroked gently with a palm, they'll relax and become quiet. If they're picked up roughly, they'll probably take offense and start to cry. If they're picked up gently and rocked slowly, they'll become quiet and attentive.

Holding, stroking, rocking, and cuddling will calm them when they're upset and make them more alert when they're drowsy. It also sends a clear message of a parent's love and affection. Long before they understand a word that parents say, they'll understand parental moods and feelings from the way they are touched.

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