

Sleep Solutions for Baby

One of the most common problems with caring for a baby is night waking. Parents with babies have many sleepless nights. Those nights will not last forever.

Newborns need to feed every few hours for 24 hours a day until they are 2 – 3 months old. Still, busy parents want to know if they can help their baby sleep longer at night.

Well-meaning family and friends will be eager to give “sleeping” advice. Before following this advice, *learn the facts* about how babies sleep. This helps you make safe changes that allow your baby to sleep better and longer.

Sleep experts tell us that everyone wakes up a number of times at night. Babies also have wakeful periods. When babies wake up, they may cry or whine. Parents often feel the need to comfort them so they will go back to sleep.

Babies also wake when something is wrong. They may:

- Be hungry, hot or cold.
- Have a tummy ache or a dirty diaper.
- Have slept too much during the day.
- Be scared.

After the first few months, if you think your baby needs you when she wakes, take care of the problem *quietly*. Use as little light as possible. Pat her on the back. Put the pacifier back in her mouth if she uses one. If your baby is just waking normally, you may start to let her learn to self-soothe. **This is *not* letting her cry for long periods without giving her attention.**

Helping your baby learn to self-soothe is a gradual process. When your baby awakes, go to her. Make sure she is okay. Each night that she cries, delay the time you go to her by a few minutes. Soon, she will learn to fall back to sleep without your attention.

Establish a bedtime routine. Stick to the same routine every night. You can begin your routine soon after you bring him home from the hospital. Some experts suggest you put your baby to bed when he is drowsy, but not yet asleep. He

will learn to fall asleep in his bed.

A newborn’s body is immature. For the first 2 – 3 months, she sets the sleep schedule. Learn and follow your baby’s sleep patterns. Sleep when she sleeps. As she gets older, she will adjust her sleeping patterns to be more like yours.



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