



**Helping your baby to sleep well
(0 - 12 months)**

Sleep is essential for your baby's growth and development. Growth hormone is released more easily when your baby is asleep which is why they appear to sleep so much, particularly in those early weeks.

How much sleep does your baby need?

Newborn babies

Newborn babies sleep a lot, but not for very long at any one time. In the first few weeks your baby will have their own pattern of waking and sleeping.



Your baby will show signs of being sleepy; some babies become fussy or cry when they get tired, while others will rub their eyes or pull on their ears. Others will have their own unique way of letting you know they're sleepy.

Most newborns are asleep more than they are awake and will sleep on and off throughout the day and night. The average amounts of sleep they need is between 14 and 17 hours during the 24-hour day.

Babies from three to six months old

As your baby grows they'll need fewer night feeds and will be able to sleep for longer. By four months, they may be spending around twice as long sleeping at night as they do during the day.

Babies from six to 12 months old

Your six month to one year old baby may no longer need night feeds and some babies will sleep for up to 12 hours a night. It is not unusual for some babies to wake during the night due to teething discomfort or hunger.

Getting baby used to day and night

It can be helpful to get your baby used to the difference between day time and night time. When your baby sleeps during the day open the curtains and don't worry about everyday noises. At night, keep the lights low or turn them off, feed and change your baby as quietly as possible and put them down to sleep. Soon your baby will learn that night time is for sleeping.

Safer sleep

Sadly, although rare, some babies die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). While sometimes there is no explanation why this happens, there are six steps you can take to reduce the risk.

Six steps to safer sleep

1. Keep baby away from smoke, before and after birth
2. Put baby in a cot, crib or Moses basket to sleep - never fall asleep with them on a sofa or chair
3. Never fall asleep with baby after drinking or taking drugs / medication
4. Put baby to sleep on their back with their feet to the bottom of the cot
5. Keep baby's head and face uncovered and make sure they don't get too hot
6. Breastfeed your baby

Where should my baby sleep?

Your baby should be in the same room as you when they're asleep, night and day, for the first six months and keep the room temperature between 18 to 24°C. Once your baby is a few weeks old it may help to get them used to going to sleep without you comforting them by putting them down in the crib when they're sleepy but still awake. Babies need to be able to fall asleep independently so they can self-soothe when they wake in the middle of the night.



Co-sleeping

Some parents choose to bed share with their baby. While this can be done to support breastfeeding, sharing a bed can be dangerous and increases the risk of SIDS. There are some circumstances when it should never be done. Ask your health visitor or breastfeeding supporter for information if you are considering co-sleeping so you are aware how to reduce the risks.

Creating a bedtime routine

When your baby is around three months old you may feel ready to introduce a bedtime routine. Getting them into a simple bedtime routine can help prevent sleep problems later on as well as giving you one-to-one time with your baby. You could try giving your baby a warm bath and putting them into nightwear. Settle baby into their crib, you could read a bedtime story, and dim the lights in the room to create a calm atmosphere, which can help your baby relax ready to go to sleep.

Expect sleep routines to change

As your baby grows and enters different stages be prepared to change your routines. Babies sleep patterns can also change and teething and illness can affect how they sleep.

Getting the sleep you need

Being a new parent can be exhausting and you may wonder if you'll ever get a good night's sleep again. It's worth remembering no matter how tough things seem right now, it will not always be like this because as baby grows they sleep for longer. In the meantime, try to rest or sleep when your baby rests or sleeps and don't be afraid to ask for help.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

The advice in this leaflet applies to all children, but children with SEND are more likely to have sleep difficulties. The advice available from your health

visitor or the staff at your local children's centre will help improve the sleep of most children, but occasionally additional support is required if your child's sleep difficulties are persistent or linked to their condition, medication or if they are in pain. This additional support can be accessed through your health visitor or your local children's centre.

Need more advice?

If your child is still having problems sleeping, or you would like more advice about establishing a routine, speak to your health visitor or a member of staff at your local children's centre who are able to advise and offer tailored support.

Find contact details for your local children's centre online:
www.knowsleychildrenscentres.co.uk

Contact your local health visiting team on:

Kirkby Team	Tel: 0151 244 3066
Manor Farm Team	Tel: 0151 290 4990
North Huyton Team	Tel: 0151 480 4066
Whiston Team	Tel: 0151 426 0611
Halewood Team	Tel: 0151 486 4011

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