

# Sleep and Your Baby

**Safe Sleep** to decrease the risk of SIDS (Sudden infant death syndrome)

- Always **put your baby on their back to sleep**
- Your baby should sleep on a **flat, firm surface**, with no pillows, blankets, bumpers, stuffed animals etc.
- Do not prop your baby up on a pillow as they could roll/slide off it.
- Always be awake and closely watching when your baby is asleep in a swing, car seat, bouncy chair etc.
- **Avoid tobacco or marijuana smoke** during pregnancy and in the home. If you are pregnant and smoke, quit today! This is a wonderful thing you can do for your baby's health.
- Room share until 6-12 months.
- Use a pacifier.
- **Avoid overheating**: the room should be cool, and avoid wrapping your baby in more than 2-3 layers.
- Never fall asleep with your baby on a couch or chair.
- Considerations for **co-sleeping**
  - Do not co-sleep if baby was premature, has had any smoke exposure (such as mother smoking, vaping or using marijuana while pregnant, or any such exposure in the home), or if your baby has heart or lung problems, or if your baby is less than 2 months old.
  - Mom must be sober and not under the influence of any drugs that could make her drowsy.
  - **Safe sleep as above**: back to sleep on a flat, firm surface with no pillows etc.
  - Baby sleeps **only next to mom**, and not between two people.



**Newborn through 3 months:** ~14-17 hours total sleep

- It is normal for newborns to **wake every 2-3 hours to feed**, and they may “**cluster feed**” every hour at times.
- You can swaddle your baby until 2 months old
- Night-time is often the most difficult time for **fussiness/colic!** Get help if needed from other family members.
- If your baby has been crying for a long time and you are getting frustrated, put your baby in their crib, leave the room, and take some deep breaths. Return when you are calm. Your baby is much better off if they are safe in their crib than with a frustrated or angry caregiver!



**3 – 6 months old:** ~12-15 hours total sleep

- Put your baby to bed when they are **drowsy but not yet asleep**.
- Once your baby starts rolling over on their own (usually around 4-6 months), if they want to roll themselves onto their stomach to sleep, let them do so. You do not need to roll them onto their back.
- Most babies at this age do not need nutrition overnight (but they might believe otherwise!).
- We recommend room-sharing until 6 months, but if sleep is an issue (such as frequent night-time awakenings) you can consider moving baby to their own room at 4 months old.

**6-12 months old:** ~12-15 hours total sleep

- If your baby is still waking frequently and this is causing you stress or fatigue, it may be time to **sleep train**.
  - o Baby should be in **their own bed**, and if possible in their own room.
  - o **Two options:** stay with your baby and then leave for longer times, or let your baby cry for a time before coming to get them.
  - o Regardless, consider letting your baby cry for 5-10 minutes before you get them after they wake in the night. Make them work for it!
  - o Be positive and happy when you are leaving the room and when you come back.
  - o Remember that **learning to self-soothe is an important skill!** Your baby may need to “exercise” and practice.
  - o Consider some white noise or soft music to soothe baby, and soft night-lights.
- Some considerations for **breast-fed babies**
  - o If your baby is dependent on latching and nursing to sleep, you may need to help them learn to go to sleep without nursing.
  - o Put them to bed when they are drowsy and not yet asleep .
  - o Consider decreasing night-time feeds (or stopping them altogether if needed!)
  - o Consider sending in dad or another family member when baby cries at night so they are not as upset about not getting to nurse.
- **Sleep regressions** are very common
  - o A baby who was sleeping well suddenly starts having trouble going to bed, or waking frequently.
  - o Often occurs around 4 and/or 9 months old; sometimes brought on by illness or family stress.
  - o May need to go back to basics and some sleep training principles!



More Information: [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)