



## Learning to Sleep

### 4 Months

#### Weeks 12-16:

- Until your baby is 16 weeks old, he should be put to sleep after every 2 hours of being awake (at most).
- Put your baby to sleep drowsy, but awake (this helps your baby to learn to fall asleep alone).
- Darkness and calm serve as clues for your baby to know it is time to go to sleep.
- Slow down activities at night and establish a bedtime routine (songs, bath).
- Continue to have naps during the day to make sure that your baby sleeps better at night. On average your baby should be taking 3 naps (or more) a day.
- Be as consistent as possible. Try to have bedtime at the same time each day, with the same routine.
- Some babies, particularly breastfed babies, need one night feeding up until they are 9 months old.

#### Weeks 16-24:

- Your baby is ready to sleep through the night. Bedtimes should be earlier, usually around 6:30pm and after you do your bedtime routine. Earlier bedtimes lead to later wake up times!
- If your baby is not naturally sleeping through the night, it is now ok to help him along.
- If your baby is growing well, does not have more than one middle-of-the-night feeding, and your pediatrician agrees, you can allow him to “cry it out” during his middle-of-the-night feeding. This is not the only way to get him to sleep through the night, but it is the fastest way. When your baby cries for his middle-of-the-night feeding, don't go to him. If you do this 2 or 3 nights in a row he'll soon be sleeping through the night!
- If the “cry-it-out” method makes you uncomfortable, you can help your baby learn to sleep through the night more gradually. Allow him to cry for short intervals and then check on him, soothe him, rock him and put him down, without feeding him. Increase the amount of time you allow your baby to cry each night. This is a more gradual method, but also effective. Once he gets used to not eating at 2am, he'll stop waking up.
- Remember that you are teaching your baby important sleep and self-soothing skills.

- Day sleep is now 3 naps. A typical schedule is wake at 7am, nap at 9am, nap at 1pm, nap at 4pm and bedtime at 6:30. Naps are usually 1 hour or more (the last nap may be shorter since it is closer to bedtime). This schedule will vary depending on what time your baby naturally wakes up.

## 6 Months

By age 6 months, most babies sleep a total of 11 1/2 to 15 hours a day (including nighttime sleep and naps) and can sleep for long stretches at a time. The average 6 month old baby needs about 14 hours of sleep per day.

### Typical sleep at 6 months:

- Bedtime at 6:30pm (range between 6–8pm)
- Possible night waking at 12am
- Start the day at 7am (range between 6–8am)
- Nap 1: 9am
- Nap 2: 1pm
- Nap 3: varies until dropped

Between the ages of 6 and 9 months, many babies may drop to two naps, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Don't worry if your baby continues to take three naps a day. Keeping regular times for bedtime and naps will help him to have healthy sleep patterns.

Sleep learning: if your baby hasn't yet settled into a sleep pattern that fits your family life, now might be a good time to try some type of sleep learning. Sleep learning can help for easier bedtimes and larger stretches at night.

### Reminders:

- Keep up your bedtime routine as much as possible. Sticking with a routine makes it easier for your baby to master!
- Have your baby sleep in the same place as often as possible
- Create calming routines around bedtime and naps, such as songs, books, and phrases you use every time

### Sleep Training

We all wake up several times every night and are able to “put ourselves back to sleep.” If your baby hasn't figured out how to fall back to sleep on their own when they wake up during the night, they will cry for you to help them fall back asleep (even when they are not hungry). If you know your baby isn't hungry in the night when he wakes (because they have skipped these

feedings before) it is ok at this age to think about allowing him to cry himself back to sleep. Usually, within a week (max), He'll learn that he can soothe himself to sleep and his crying will disappear.

### Reminders:

- Putting your baby in the crib tired but awake helps them to learn to fall asleep on their own! If they fall asleep in your arms, they are shocked to wake up alone in the middle of the night
- Teaching your baby to put themselves to sleep (also called self-soothing) is very important for their development.

### “Crying it out”

If your baby is growing well, does not have more than one middle-of-the-night feeding, and your pediatrician agrees, you can allow them to “cry it out” during their middle-of-the-night feeding. This is not the only way to get your baby to sleep through the night, but it is the fastest way. When your baby cries for their middle-of-the-night feeding, don't go to them. If you do this 2 or 3 nights in a row they will soon be sleeping through the night!

If the “cry-it-out” method makes you uncomfortable, you can help your baby learn to sleep through the night more gradually. Allow them to cry for short intervals and then check on your baby, soothe them, rock them and then put them down, without feeding. Increase the amount of time you allow your baby to cry each night. This is a more gradual method, but also effective. Once your baby gets used to not eating at 2am, they will stop waking up.

### Changes in Sleep

If your baby was sleeping perfectly and is suddenly waking up in the night, don't stress! Issues with sleep often come up when babies reach certain milestones (for example, sitting up, crawling, standing, walking). Your baby may be practicing new skills or finding themselves stuck in a position they can't get out of. Try and give your baby time to practice these skills during the day so they can get rest at night!

Waking up and finding you're not there may also upset your baby. After a couple of nights of going to your baby and soothing them verbally, your baby will learn to self-soothe. This is a normal phase of separation anxiety (see “Separation Anxiety” for additional information).

### Tips:

- Try to avoid feeding or rocking your baby back to sleep once they have already broken that habit.
- Try overnight diapers so your baby stays dry
- Get a white noise machine (or app on your phone) to help block out noise