



Easy Steps to Better Sleep: Newborn

IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP FOR YOUR BABY

Good sleep is essential for every baby as sleep has a significant impact on learning and behavioural development. Adequate sleep quantity and good sleep quality contribute to optimal brain function and the overall growth and health of your baby. When your baby sleeps well, it also reduces the disruptions to your family's sleep.



It is important that parents understand what to expect for your baby's sleeping needs even before baby arrives. This would ensure that you have the knowledge to implement good sleeping habits for your baby for a good head start in life.

SLEEP PATTERNS IN THE FIRST FEW MONTHS

- Sleep-wake cycles in the early months are largely driven by hunger. An established sleep pattern usually begins when your baby is 4 months old.¹
- It is normal for breast-fed babies to have slightly shorter sleeping periods compared to formula-fed babies due to the easier digestibility of breast milk. The benefits of breastfeeding are tremendous and it is recommended that all babies be breastfed for up to 6 months for optimal growth and health.²



¹ Mindell, J. A., & Owens, J. A. (2015). *A Clinical Guide to Pediatric Sleep: Diagnosis and Management of Sleep Problems*. Wolters Kluwer Health.

² World Health Organization. (n.d.). *Breastfeeding*. [Who.int/health-topics/breastfeeding#tab=tab_2](https://www.who.int/health-topics/breastfeeding#tab=tab_2)





SLEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

An important consideration for parents is the baby's sleeping arrangements. It is generally not recommended to bed-share with your baby as there are potential risks of accidental suffocation. You may put your baby to sleep either in his/her own cot or bed, and place the cot or bed close to your bed if desired. Placing your baby on his/her back is also recommended to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

KEY TAKEAWAY

Your sleep is paramount to your physical health and mental well-being, especially when caring for your newborn baby. The care of your newborn requires a lot of time and effort and may lead to sleep deprivation for mothers, contributing to postpartum depression. Hence, parents should take the opportunity to sleep when your baby sleeps so that you can also have sufficient rest. Seek advice from your doctor should you not be getting adequate or good quality sleep. Help is available.



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