

# Better Sleep for You & Your Baby

Falling asleep in a crib takes practice, but it's the safest place for your baby to sleep. They might cry when they're first put in the crib, but this is normal. Here are some things you can try to help them get used to sleeping in a crib.

**Remember: The safest way for a baby to sleep is on their back, in their own crib, without any blankets, pillows, or toys. Make sure the baby's mattress is firm, flat (not inclined), and fits snugly in its frame. Use only the mattress that comes with the crib.**

- 1 Make sure your baby has active play time, like "tummy time," during the day.
- 2 Respond to your baby's needs quickly during the day.
- 3 Keep the crib in your room and put your baby in when they begin to look tired. This helps them learn to fall asleep on their own.
- 4 Keep a journal of when your baby sleeps so you can learn their routine and rest when they do.
- 5 Before bedtime, do a few calming activities with your baby, like bathing, gently massaging their muscles, or reading to them.
- 6 Talk or sing softly to your baby before they go to sleep. Just the sound of your voice is very soothing to your baby.
- 7 Wear a sling or hold your baby while they are awake, keeping fabric away from their nose and mouth.
- 8 If your baby seems restless at bedtime, put them to bed 30 minutes earlier. When overtired, babies can become energetic to fight off sleep.
- 9 Play soft music, turn on a fan, or put a ticking clock near your baby's crib.
- 10 Place a warmed towel on the crib sheet and **remove it** just before placing your baby in the crib on their back.

# Understanding Your Baby's Needs

## Why does my baby sleep for only a few hours at a time?

Newborns may sleep 10-18 hours a day, and they may wake to eat every two to four hours. By 8 weeks old, your baby's sleep may become more predictable.

## When will my baby be able to sleep through the night?

Babies between 3 and 6 months old need 12-15 hours of sleep per day, which includes two to four naps. Babies 6 months old and older are able to sleep through most of the night but will still need one or two naps during the day, and many will need at least one nighttime feeding.

## Will limiting naps during the day help my baby sleep better at night?

According to sleep research, regular naps during the day will improve your baby's sleep during the night. When and how long a baby should nap varies from one baby to the next. As babies grow, they will take fewer and shorter naps until they reach 3-4 years of age.

## Having Some Trouble?

Always **put your baby in their crib to sleep with a dry diaper**; a wet diaper can cause a baby to wake up.

**Use dark shades over any windows** near your baby's crib. Streetlights or early morning sun may wake a baby.

A stuffy nose can cause a baby to wake up, so **make sure your baby's nostrils are clear** before you put them in the crib to sleep. Be sure their room is dusted regularly. Keep smoke, hair spray, paint fumes, and baby powder away from them.

Drool stains on the crib sheet, drool rash on their cheeks/chin, or swollen gums may be signs they're having teething trouble while trying to sleep. If you think this is the case for your baby, **ask your pediatrician how you should relieve the pain.**

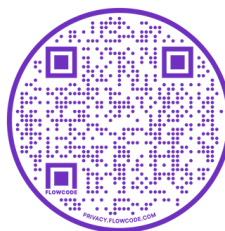
If you see a rash or redness on their skin, your baby may be allergic to a fabric, laundry detergent, or fabric softener, which could keep them from sleeping. **Change their clothes and bedding and switch laundry products.**

Developing babies can have restless nights when they're learning how to sit up, roll over, or walk. They can sometimes practice in their sleep! **Your baby can get stuck sitting up** because they don't know how to lay back down yet. **This can be fixed by teaching them how:** During the day, sit your baby up, help your baby lie back down, and then encourage them to try it on their own.

**Still having problems?** There might be a medical reason for your baby's restless nights, so it's best to **ask your pediatrician for advice.**

Tell the doctor if your baby:

- Seems to have pain in their belly
- Was a good sleeper but suddenly became a restless sleeper
- Has never slept well
- Seems like they could be sick
- Cries a lot for no reason and nothing works to comfort them
- Has trouble breathing
- Shows changes in behavior because they aren't sleeping



For more information about healthy child development and safe sleep for babies, visit [www.ounce.org](http://www.ounce.org) or scan the QR code.