

## HOW CAN I KEEP MY BABY SAFE WHILE THEY SLEEP?

All parents want to keep their babies safe while they sleep. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (or SIDS) can be a scary term for parents. There are ways to reduce the risks of SIDS:

- Put baby's bed in the same room as their parents for the first 6 months of life (called room sharing)
- Smoke-free environment day and night
- Use a crib, cradle or bassinette that meets Health Canada's safety standards
- Place baby on their back to sleep for every sleep
- Sleep surface is firm and flat
- Only baby in the crib – no blankets, pillows, stuffed toys or bumper pads etc.
- Room should not be too warm
- Dress baby in light clothes such as a one piece sleeper

### DID YOU KNOW:

Adult beds, waterbeds, air mattresses, couches/ sofas, pillows/cushions, playpens/ play-yards, baby seats, car seats, swings, bouncers, strollers are not safe sleep surfaces for babies.



## WHAT ABOUT BED-SHARING?



While a crib is the safest place for babies to sleep, some families may choose to have their baby sleep with

them (called bed-sharing). If you choose to bed-share make sure:

\* Following the “**Safe Sleep Seven**” can make bed-sharing safer.

**You need to be:**

1. A non-smoker
2. Sober and unimpaired
3. Breastfeeding

**Your baby needs to be:**

4. Healthy and full-term
5. On his/her back for every sleep
6. Lightly dressed, not swaddled

**You both need to be:**

7. On a safe surface (firm, flat mattress and no spaces for baby to get stuck)

**Pets and other children should not be in the bed**

## WHAT ABOUT NAPS?

Napping helps a baby to sleep better at night. Keeping your baby awake during the day will not help your baby sleep longer at night!

Some babies nap as little as 20 minutes, while others may nap for 3 or more hours. Both are normal!

## HOW CAN I GET MY BABY TO FALL ASLEEP?

Get to know your baby's tired cues.

Tired cues can look like:

- Yawning
- Jerky movements
- Becoming quiet, not wanting to play
- Fussing
- Rubbing their eyes
- Crying
- Facial grimaces (i.e. pulling faces)
- Tight fists

Some babies fall asleep easily with just a little help, while others can be harder to settle. Feeding, rocking, singing, shushing, and patting may be soothing to your baby. An over-tired baby can be harder to settle. Signs that the baby is over-tired include being very over-active, stare-y eyes, and being very quick to cry.



### TIP:

*You cannot spoil your baby by feeding, cuddling, or rocking them. Babies love to have us near and are soothed when we respond to their needs.*



## WHEN WILL MY BABY SLEEP THROUGH THE NIGHT?

Babies will sleep through the night when they are developmentally ready to do so. Many children will wake up often even as toddlers.



## WHAT TO EXPECT...

### 1-3 MONTHS:

- Irregular sleep patterns
- Many naps during the day and night
- Usually wake every 2-3 hours to feed
- Babies may move, grunt, and twitch during sleep

### 3-6 MONTHS:

- May start a more regular sleep pattern including naps
- May start sleeping for longer stretches
- Frequent waking to feed is still common

### 6-12 MONTHS:

- May change to a fairly regular sleep routine
- Many short naps may change to fewer, longer naps
- Waking at night to feed is STILL common

### DID YOU KNOW:

*All babies have different personalities and temperaments. This can affect how much sleep baby needs, and how well they adjust to changes.*

## WHY IS MY BABY NOW WAKING WHEN THEY WERE SLEEPING SO WELL?!

Just when you thought you had your baby all figured out, Boom – their sleep habits change. This is normal and can be due to:

- Teething
- Illness
- Growth spurts
- Learning new skills like rolling, sitting, crawling, standing
- Sleep regression



## WHAT ABOUT SLEEP TRAINING?

“Sleep training” is a common term for a method of letting baby fall asleep on their own. While self-soothing is an important skill for a baby to learn, some training methods involve leaving baby to cry without being comforted. Some unintended effects on mother and baby could include:

- Increased crying
- Early weaning from breastfeeding
- Increased anxiety for mom

### TIP:

When you feel that you and your baby are ready, try putting your baby down on their back when they are sleepy but still awake, so they learn to fall asleep on their own.

## SHOULD I HAVE A SLEEP ROUTINE FOR MY BABY?

Over time, babies may “learn” that the bedtime routine and their crib mean it is time for sleep. They may learn to fall asleep on their own at this stage. Things such as reading a story, bath time, baby massage, singing or rocking can be part of your baby’s routine.



### TIP:

Once a bedtime routine is in place, it is important to try and keep it consistent. This signals to baby it is time to sleep.

## COMMON MYTH

Some people think baby will sleep longer at night if they give cereal or formula. This has not been shown to be true. Giving food before baby shows signs of readiness (around 6 months of age), or giving formula can lead to:

- Higher risk of SIDS
- Baby more prone to getting sick
- Higher risk of long term health problems
- Early weaning from breastfeeding
- Higher risk of allergies

## I'M SO TIRED. HOW DO I COPE?

Almost all adults find broken sleep makes them feel tired and cranky, and relationships can suffer. Here are some ideas to help sleep happen more easily:



- Get outside
- Ask for help from a friend or family member with some of your day-to-day stressors
- Exercise and eat well
- Start your own relaxing bedtime routine which could include having a hot shower or bath
- Breastfeed and cuddle your baby before bed
- Try meditation or deep breathing to relax

### TIPS FOR PARENTS:

Avoid caffeine and alcohol before bed. These can decrease the quality of your sleep. Bright lights and screen use can also make falling asleep harder.



If you have questions or would like more information about your baby’s sleep, talk to a Public Health Nurse by calling the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit.

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# INFANT SLEEP

## What Parents Want To Know

People who say they sleep like a baby usually don't have one ... (Leo J. Burke)



Sleep - or lack of it - is a hot topic with new parents. Comparing babies sleep habits can cause needless stress for families.