

Helping My Baby Sleep

Learn my sleep cues.

When I'm sleepy, I might . . .



yawn



look away



become
fussier



rub at my
head or ears



Help me not get over-tired.

I usually need to sleep again about 1-2 hours after I wake up.

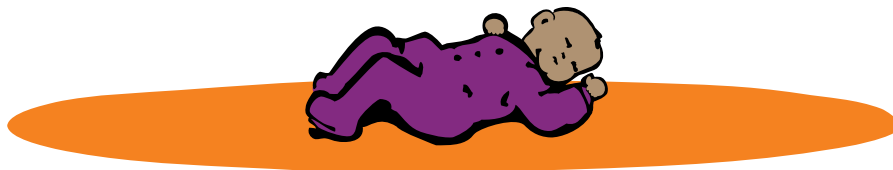
If I get too tired, I will get more fussy and it will be harder for me to fall asleep.

Help me get to sleep.

When I show my sleep cues, help me fall asleep with some simple sleep rituals:

- sing to me
- rock me
- lower the lights

Babies love routines.



Helping My Baby Sleep

Helping your baby learn to sleep is one of the biggest challenges for all parents.

What makes sleep so hard for babies? New babies have a very young nervous system. They easily become over-tired, which causes them to become fussy, especially in the evenings. This fussiness in the evenings is often the worst at around 4-6 weeks of age.

When will it ever get better? As your baby's brain grows, a pattern to their sleep will develop and the night sleep will get longer. A baby's sleep pattern changes a lot during the first year. Infant sleep is a moving target!

What can I do?

- **Hold your baby a lot (you cannot spoil your infant).** Watch for your baby's cues for when they want to be fed, when they need to sleep and for when they want to be interacted with or need a break. It is NOT SPOILING to respond to your baby's cues.
- **Most young infants need to go back to sleep after 1-2 hours of being awake.** Just like we feed newborns "on demand", we also want to "sleep on demand".
- **Watch for signs of sleepiness or over-tiredness.** (rubbing their eyes, yawning, increased fussiness or a shorter attention span). At the first sign of sleepiness, when the "sleep gate" opens, help your baby settle to sleep.
- **Try to prevent over-tiredness.** When babies become too tired, they often fight going to sleep, become more fussy and wake up more frequently.
- **At 4-6 weeks, babies often start sleeping a little longer at the beginning of the night.** The beginning of the night can be a good time for parents to try to go to sleep too, so that they can also get a little longer stretch of sleep.

- **At 2-3 months, babies often want to go back to sleep first thing in the morning, within 1-2 hours of waking up.** At the first sign of sleepiness, try to help your baby fall asleep. Try a "nap ritual" and a "bedtime ritual" that you do each day that lets your baby know that it is time to sleep (singing, rocking, lowering lights, etc.) Babies love routines!
- **Around 4-6 months of age, many infants move their bedtime to a much earlier time (usually between 6 pm and 8 pm).** This can be a big SURPRISE. Watch for signs of sleepiness in the early evening and help your baby fall asleep before they get over-tired. Also, gradually try to put them down "sleepy but awake" so that they learn how to fall asleep themselves some of the time. This will help them sleep through some of their night wakings as they get older.
- **If your baby is waking up right after they fall asleep, they might be over-tired.** Continue to watch your baby for cues that they are tired. Start the nap or bedtime ritual at the first sign of sleepiness.
- **Infant sleep can often feel frustrating or challenging.** Please call your pediatric care provider if your baby is having difficulty with sleeping.

