Some babies sleep much more than others. Some sleep for long periods, others in short bursts. Some soon sleep through the night, while some do not for a long time.

Your baby will have their own pattern of waking and sleeping, and it's unlikely to be the same as other babies you know.

It's also unlikely to fit in with your need for sleep. Try to sleep when your baby sleeps.

If you're breastfeeding, in the early weeks your baby is likely to doze off for short periods during a feed. Carry on feeding until you think your baby has finished or until they're fully asleep. This is a good opportunity to try to get a bit of rest yourself.

If you're not sleeping at the same time as your baby, do not worry about keeping the house silent while they sleep. It's good to get your baby used to sleeping through a certain amount of noise.

It's a good idea to teach your baby that night-time is different from daytime from the start. During the day, open curtains, play games and do not worry too much about everyday noises when they sleep.

At night, you might find it helpful to:

* keep the lights down low
* not talk much and keep your voice quiet
* put your baby down as soon as they've been fed and changed
* not change your baby unless they need it
* not play with your baby

Your baby will gradually learn that night-time is for sleeping.

For at least the first 6 months your baby should be in the same room as you when they're asleep, both day and night. This can reduce the risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome).

Particularly in the early weeks, you may find your baby only falls asleep in your or your partner's arms, or when you're standing by the cot.

Getting your baby into a simple, soothing bedtime routine may help them settle and can be a great opportunity to have 1-to-1 time with your baby.

The routine could consist of:

* having a bath
* changing into night clothes and a fresh nappy
* putting them to bed
* reading a bedtime story
* dimming the lights in the room to create a calm atmosphere
* giving a goodnight kiss and cuddle
* singing a lullaby or having a wind-up musical mobile you can turn on when you've put your baby to bed
* brushing their teeth (if they have any)

As your child gets older, it can be helpful to keep to a similar bedtime routine. Too much excitement and stimulation just before bedtime can wake your child up again. Spend some time winding down and doing some calmer activities, like reading.

How much sleep does your baby need?

Just as with adults, babies' and children's sleep patterns vary. From birth, some babies need more or less sleep than others. The list below shows the average amount of sleep babies and children need during a 24-hour period, including daytime naps.

Newborn sleep needs

Most newborn babies are asleep more than they are awake. Their total daily sleep varies, but can be around 18 hours. Babies will wake during the night because they need to be fed. Being too hot or too cold can also disturb their sleep.

Sleep requirements at 3 to 6 months old

As your baby grows, they'll need fewer night feeds and may be able to sleep for longer. Some babies may sleep for 5 to 8 hours or longer at night, but not all.

Baby sleep at 6 to 12 months

For some babies aged 6 months to a year, night feeds may no longer be necessary and some babies will sleep for around 15 hours, most of this at night. Teething discomfort or hunger may wake some babies during the night.

Sleep requirements from 12 months

Babies will sleep for around 12 to 15 hours in total after their first birthday.

2-year-old sleep needs

Most 2 year olds need about 12 to 14 hours sleep, including naps in the daytime.

Coping with disturbed nights

Newborn babies invariably wake up repeatedly in the night for the first few months, and disturbed nights can be very hard to cope with.

If you have a partner, ask them to help. If you're formula feeding, encourage your partner to share the feeds. If you're breastfeeding, ask your partner to take over the early morning changing and dressing so you can go back to sleep.

Once you're into a good breastfeeding routine, your partner could occasionally give a bottle of expressed breast milk during the night. If you're on your own, you could ask a friend or relative to stay for a few days so you can get some sleep.

Dealing with baby sleep pattern changes

All babies change their sleep patterns.

Be prepared to change routines as your baby grows and enters different stages. And remember, growth spurts, teething and illnesses can all affect how your baby sleeps.

If your baby is having problems sleeping or you need more advice about getting into a routine, speak to your health visitor.