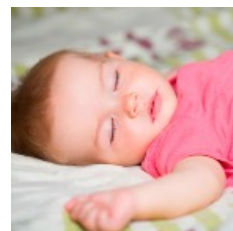




Sleeping Through the Night

Healthy, growing babies usually do not need to be awakened to breastfeed (</english/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/default.aspx>) or take a bottle (</English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/Pages/Bottle-Feeding.aspx>).

Check with your pediatrician about nighttime awakening if your baby is *not* doing the following:



- Growing and gaining weight steadily.
- Feeding well 8 to 12 times a day for a breastfeeding baby or 5 to 8 times a day for a bottle-fed baby or older infant.
- Urinating normally with at least 4 wet diapers a day.
- Having at least 3 normal bowel movements per day. Most breastfeeding babies have more frequent bowel movements that are soft and seedy.

Concrete Ways to Help Newborns Learn How to Sleep

- Help him fall asleep with a soothing sensation, such as rocking, sucking a thumb or hand, or nonnutritive suckling at the breast. However, never place your baby in the crib with a bottle for comfort. The natural sugar in many liquids promotes growth of the bacteria that cause tooth decay (</English/ages-stages/baby/teething-tooth-care/Pages/Preventing-Tooth-Decay.aspx>), and the effect is especially severe when the sugary residue stays in the mouth all night long. This can result in serious dental decay, known as nursing bottle caries, in developing primary teeth. Liquid, even water, pooling in the mouth can also back up through the eustachian tubes, the tiny passages that run between the throat and ear. This can set up conditions that foster the development of ear infections (</English/health-issues/conditions/ear-nose-throat/Pages/Ear-Infection-Information.aspx>).
- Give him lots of attention while he is awake. Especially early on, babies need help to feel calm and secure. Holding your baby and being sensitive to his signals and needs will not spoil him or reinforce a behavior.
- Pay attention to signs of being sleepy or overtired. By noticing your baby's cues early on you'll also have an opportunity to help him fall asleep before he is overtired. These signs will become easier to identify as you get to know your baby, and in turn, it will become easier for you to settle him for sleep.

The bottom line is to meet your baby's needs early on so that he will be better able to regulate his sleep cycles and emotions.

What It Really Means to be a Good Sleeper

It's important for parents, caregivers, families, and friends to understand that at this age, a good sleeper is a child who wakes up frequently but can get himself back to sleep. It is not a child who sleeps without waking for 10 hours at night. Frequent waking is developmentally appropriate and allows the baby to wake up when he is in a situation in which he is not getting enough oxygen or is having problems breathing. Sleeping undisturbed for prolonged periods at this age is not healthy.

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Source Sleep: What Every Parent Needs to Know (Copyright © 2013 American Academy of Pediatrics)

The information contained on this Web site should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

