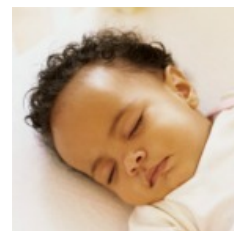




Preemie Sleep Patterns

Don't expect your preterm baby (</english/ages-stages/baby/preemie/Pages/default.aspx>) to sleep through the night for many months. **Unlike a term baby, who might sleep a full 6 to 8 hours at night by 4 months of age, your baby may not accomplish this task until 6 to 8 months or later.**



During this transition period, play with your baby during daytime awake periods. Keep night feedings as quiet and as businesslike as possible, with minimal or soft lighting. This will help your baby learn the difference between day and night and may help you get much-needed sleep at appropriate hours. But remember, it may take several weeks before your baby gets her days and nights straight!

Following a Routine

Babies vary in how easily they settle down to sleep. Follow the same steps each time you put your baby down to sleep to help her learn a personal going-to-sleep routine. At first, you'll probably jump up and go to your baby at the first crying sound. But as you get to know each other and as you notice your baby's self-comforting skills, you need to allow your baby to console herself and go back to sleep on her own.

Self-Comforting

Self-comforting is an important skill for your baby. Beginning early to teach your baby to fall asleep on her own will ease you through the later developmental stage (at 6–9 months corrected age (</English/ages-stages/baby/preemie/pages/Corrected-Age-For-Preemies.aspx>)) when sleep problems may emerge once again.

Setting the Mood for Sleep

To help your baby rest, try playing the radio softly or placing a ticking clock in the room for those first few weeks at home. In addition, a soft night-light may be reassuring to you both. Let your baby suck on her fist or a pacifier (</English/ages-stages/baby/crying-colic/Pages/Practical-Pacifier-Principles.aspx>) if this seems calming.

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