



Stages of Newborn Sleep

Sleep patterns in newborns are different from those in older children and adults.

For newborns, sleep is about equally divided between rapid eye movement (REM) and non-REM sleep and follows these stages:



Stage 1: Drowsiness, in which the baby starts to fall asleep.

Stage 2: REM sleep (also referred to as *active sleep*), in which the baby may twitch or jerk her arms or legs, and her eyes move under her closed eyelids. Breathing is often irregular and may stop for 5 to 10 seconds—a condition called *normal periodic breathing of infancy*—then start again with a burst of rapid breathing at the rate of 50 to 60 breaths a minute for 10 to 15 seconds, followed by regular breathing until the cycle repeats itself. The baby's skin color does not change with the pauses in breathing and there is no cause for concern (in contrast with apnea (</English/ages-stages/baby/sleep/Pages/Sleep-Apnea-Detection.aspx>)). Babies generally outgrow periodic breathing by about the middle of the first year.

Stage 3: Light sleep, in which breathing becomes more regular and sleep becomes less active.

Stages 4 and 5: Deep non-REM sleep (also referred to as *quiet sleep*). Twitching and other movements cease, and the baby falls into sleep that becomes progressively deeper. During these stages, the baby may be more difficult to awake.

Last Updated 9/18/2013

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.

