

Your baby's sleep at... 6 - 12 months

Your sleeping baby

Sleep is not under our control and cannot be forced.
Here's how it happens:

6 - 9 months

Your baby may sleep up to 14-15 hours in a 24 hour period, including 1-3 naps during the day.

9 - 12 months

Your baby may sleep up to 13-14 hours in a 24 hour period, including at least 1 nap during the day.

It is usual for babies at these ages to still wake for feeds during the night.



Recognising sleep cues

- Sleep cues can vary from baby to baby, but you will begin to recognise your own baby's cues over time. The cues will also change as they grow.
- They may yawn, rub their eyes, pull at their ears, become quieter, or you may notice them frowning, pulling their hair, being less engaged and responsive, a glazed look, drooping eyes, they may want to suck/feed, or arch backwards. However, becoming irritable and beginning to cry are late signs and can lead to your baby becoming over tired.

What can affect sleep?

- **Environment.** Artificial light can stimulate your baby's brain making it more difficult for them to fall asleep.
- **Sensory stimulation.** A calm and relaxed bedtime routine is important.

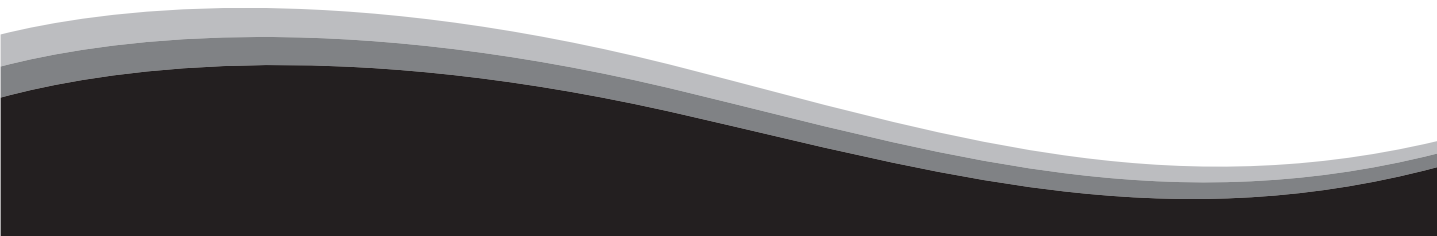
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- underlying medical problems (eg reflux)
 - minor ailments (eg coughs/colds)
 - teething
 - changes in usual routine, eg:
 - o holidays
 - o moving house
 - o childcare arrangements
 - o parent returning to work
 - transition into own room or with sibling (from age 6 months)

Your baby's development

- Growth spurts (age 6 and 9 months). During a growth spurt your baby will put on weight and grow in length and head circumference more quickly than usual. Your baby may also master a skill that they have been working on for a while. Babies going through growth spurts may become clingy, fussy and unsettled, and this can disrupt nap times and night-time.
- Your baby may begin to roll and pull themselves to stand at this age.
- Introduction of solids is an exciting time, but does not necessarily mean your baby will start sleeping through.
- Separation anxiety (may begin around 8 months). This is part of emotional growth - your baby needs to trust that you will come back to them when they need you. They may only respond to one carer or those close to them, which is okay and will resolve.

Ideas to support you and your baby

- Have a set routine during the day and open the curtains for exposure to daylight. At bedtime have a consistent routine and consider using blackout blinds which may support your baby's own sleep rhythms.
 - Help your baby understand their own circadian rhythm (sleep-wake cycle) with exposure to daylight when they wake and keeping the environment dark during the night, to support a good daytime and night-time routine.
 - Limit stimulation before the bedtime routine starts, by reducing the light, screen time (no use of TV, tablet or smart phone an hour before going to bed) and background noises to encourage a calm and relaxed atmosphere. Red night lights are thought to be helpful too.
 - Recognise sleep cues. Is your baby sleepy, hungry, unwell, too hot? Maybe a later bedtime might help.
 - Be responsive to your baby's needs but offer a relaxed response. They may just be finding their own comfort.
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- Relaxation techniques. Baby massage and yoga can add to a positive, calm routine.
 - Time out for you. Try mindfulness – visit NHS Choices or apps such as Headspace.
 - Allow another carer to attend to your baby if possible.

As a service we do not recommend any sleep modification/training techniques that involve leaving your baby/child to cry, such as controlled crying, pick up/put down. Recent evidence highlights the importance of responding to all of their needs responsively, in order to achieve optimum health and emotional wellbeing for your child.

For further support or information please contact your health visiting team.

Useful websites

Caring for your baby at night - a guide for parents, Off to the best start and Guide to bottle feeding

www.unicef.org.uk

Infant sleep information source

www.isisonline.org.uk

If you would like this information in another format, please contact the Your Experience Team on freephone 0800 694 5530. Alternatively you can email wcnt.yourexperience@nhs.net

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