

## **Sleeping..**

A newborn baby spends most of her time on two things: sleeping and feeding - although, as she needs an average of 8 diaper changes a day, maybe that should be three things :)

Newborn babies sleep for around 17-18 hours a day, but the bad news is she will sleep only for 3 or 4 hours at a time. When she wakes she will probably need feeding and/or a diaper change.

Babies are not born with a conception of day and night, so you have to teach her to take short naps in the day and longer sleeps at night. During the first few weeks you will have to feed on demand and let her decide when she will sleep. Then you should try to encourage her to take the majority of her sleep at night by changing her surroundings: at night she should sleep in a darkened room (either her own bedroom or a corner of yours), in her cot. During the day keep her in bright light (but not direct sunlight, babies get sunburnt very easily), in her buggy.

After about 4 months baby should be sleeping for a total of about 15 hours, but she should now be sleeping for around 8-10 hours at night and without a break. She will benefit from a set routine at bedtime. A bath followed by a feed and a clean diaper, then settle her in her bed while she is still awake and play her some soothing music. Mobiles suspended over the cot work wonders.

Getting baby to establish a routine is a gradual process so don't worry if it takes a while. There will still be the odd night-time feed required until she reaches about 6 months when she should last all night without refuelling! Aren't you looking forward to that!

**Sleeping Position** To minimise the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (also known as cot death):

- place baby on her back,
- tuck in the sheet and blanket (don't use a duvet until she is at least 12 months),
- make sure the room is neither too hot nor too cold - ideal temperature 65°F,

**Sleeping Problems** If baby isn't sleeping well at night, it may be because:

- she is too hot, too cold, hungry, thirsty, or needs changing,
- she is getting too much sleep in the day. A recent study found that keeping baby in bright light during the daytime naps will teach her the difference between a night-time sleep and a daytime nap,
- she isn't tired enough. Introduce more energetic playtimes, then wind down an hour before bedtime,
- she is over-tired. Introduce a quiet time before bed to calm her down. You might also try baby massage.
- she has colic. That's a whole different problem and you will find a separate article about colic.

Finally, remember that, like adults, all babies are not the same and some will need less sleep than others.

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Author: Tony Luck who runs a site with advice about babies. You will also find the fascinating [chinese pregnancy calendar](#) which is supposed to tell you whether the baby you are expecting will be a girl or boy, and a [conception chart](#) to tell you when baby is expected.