

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Baby Business

Sleeping and crying in the first few months



Hello, and welcome to Baby Business.

Baby Business aims to support you to manage your baby's sleep and crying in the first few months of life.

Baby Business was created through extensive research and experience in baby crying and sleep. We believe that it can make a big positive difference to your life with a new baby.

We hope you find Baby Business helpful!

The Baby Business team,

A/Professor Harriet Hiscock

Paediatrician

A/Professor Jordana Bayer

Clinical Psychologist

Warren Cann

CEO, Parenting Research Centre

Dr. Fallon Cook

Research Fellow

Produced by the Centre for Community Child Health at The Royal Children's Hospital and the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute. 2014.

Raising Children Network has lots of resources to help you with your new baby every step of the way from prenatal to young adulthood. raisingchildren.net.au



Contents

The first three months 5

Sleeping 5

| | |
|--|----|
| Normal sleep patterns | 6 |
| Infant sleep cycles | 6 |
| Sleep cues: parent dependent and independent | 7 |
| Steps for settling a baby | 8 |
| Co-sleeping | 9 |
| Tired signs in babies | 10 |
| How long should I to try to settle my baby? | 10 |
| What if my baby will not settle? | 11 |
| Re-settling baby | 11 |
| Dummies | 12 |
| Wrapping and sleeping position | 12 |
| Safe Swaddling | 13 |

Crying 15

| | |
|---|----|
| The normal crying curve | 16 |
| Normal baby crying patterns | 16 |
| Baby hunger signs | 17 |
| Medical causes of crying | 17 |
| Different approaches to baby care | 18 |
| Baby myths | 19 |
| If your baby is difficult to soothe | 20 |

After the first three months 23

| | |
|---|----|
| Sleep and feeding patterns (three to four months) | 24 |
| Rescue and roll-over feeds | 24 |
| Additional resources for families | 25 |



The first three months

SLEEPING

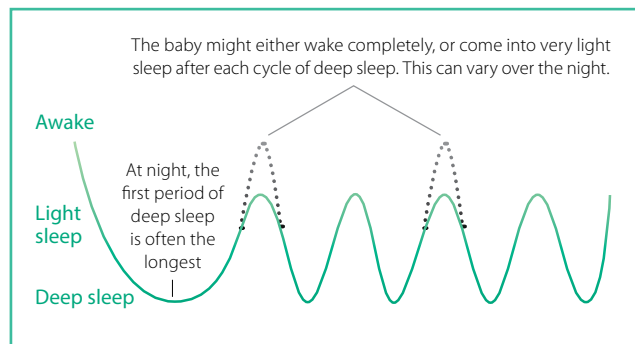
Normal sleep patterns

Your baby might either wake completely, or come into very light sleep after each cycle of deep sleep. This can vary over the night.

Some simple information about normal sleep patterns and cycles can help you to learn more about your baby's sleep.

- We all cycle through deep and light sleep (babies every 20 to 50 minutes, adults every 90 minutes).
- In deep sleep babies lie still, breathe evenly, and sometimes jerk.
- In light sleep babies look restless, groan, and sometimes open their eyes and look around the room.
- For babies, sleep cycles can last 20 to 50 minutes, so they can wake up many times overnight. This is normal – often a baby will re-settle on their own without parents being aware.
- Sleep is an acquired (or learned) skill – it doesn't always come naturally.
- Like any skill, sleep gets harder to do when overtired.

Infant sleep cycles



TIP

You can teach your baby that night-time is sleep-time by keeping things calm and quiet – this means no play time, no loud noise and no bright lights during the night.

Your baby will start to learn that daytime is for play and adventure, but night-time is just for sleep and rest. This can help your baby to settle more quickly and sleep more soundly.

Over the course of one night (or day), your baby will repeatedly cycle from light to deep sleep. In very young babies this cycle of light to deep sleep occurs every 20 or so minutes. In older babies it might take 30 to 50 minutes.

The way your baby goes to sleep at the start of the night (and the start of daytime naps) is the way they will expect to go back to sleep overnight. If the last thing your baby remembers is being rocked/fed to sleep at the start of the night, they are going to want to be rocked/fed back to sleep when they wake overnight!

Sleep cues: parent dependent and independent

Babies rely on different cues to help them go to sleep. Adults do too, for example, most adults have a preferred pillow and will lie in a certain position to fall asleep.

All babies develop their own set of sleep cues and you can play a big role in determining what these will be.

Parent-dependent cues to get babies to fall asleep include:

- rocking
- feeding
- walking in a pram
- driving around the block in a car.

Babies learn to rely on these cues to fall back to sleep when they wake during the night.

Parent-independent sleep cues help your baby learn how to fall asleep without your help. If your baby can fall asleep at the start of the night without direct help from you, your baby will be more likely to re-settle during the night without crying, and will only tend to cry out during the night if they are hungry or uncomfortable.

Parent-independent sleep cues can include:

- a dark and quiet room away from the television and other children
- the same sleep place for both day and night whenever possible
- wrapping/swaddling or tucking your baby into their cot in the same way for every sleep
- patting or gently stroking your baby until they're drowsy but not asleep.

If your baby falls asleep with parent-independent sleep cues and wakes between sleep cycles, they will see that everything is in its usual place (darkened room, quiet, still swaddled etc.) and are likely to fall back to sleep without calling out.

Steps for settling your baby

- 1 Be alert to your baby's tired signs (overtired babies are very hard to settle)
- 2 Take your baby into their bedroom
- 3 Darken the bedroom (during day and night) and minimise interaction to prepare your baby for sleep
- 4 Wrap your baby and/or provide a dummy
- 5 Cuddle your baby and put them into cot/bassinette quiet but still awake
- 6 If your baby grizzles or is quiet, you should leave the room. Give your baby the opportunity to settle on their own. Some babies will grizzle themselves to sleep.
- 7 If your baby starts to cry, stay to settle them in the cot (stroking, gentle patting) until your baby is quiet but not asleep
- 8 Leave the room.

You might need to repeat this process several times.

TIP

In the night: your baby will feed three to four times and might fall asleep doing so – this is normal.

In the day: it is best not to feed your baby to sleep. After feeding, let your baby have some 'happy-awake-time' and then put them into their cot drowsy but awake so they learn to settle to sleep on their own.

Co-sleeping

Talk about safe sleeping with your child and family health nurse. SIDS and Kids recommends parents DO NOT co-sleep with their baby.

If you do choose to share a bed with your baby, make sure that:

- your bed is in the middle of the room (not against a wall)
- your mattress fits tight in the bed frame.

Co-sleeping can be dangerous for your baby. Don't co-sleep if either you or your partner:

- smokes
- drinks alcohol
- uses non-prescription drugs
- takes any sedating medication
- is a heavy sleeper

or if you have a:

- doona or other loose bedding
- waterbed.

If any of these circumstances exist, your baby will be safer sleeping in their own cot beside your bed rather than in the bed.

Your baby's tired signs

Become familiar with your baby's tired signs. Many babies follow this pattern:

- After daytime feeds, your baby will usually be happy. This 'happy-awake-time' is less than 15 minutes in the first few weeks and 60 to 90 minutes by three months.
- When your baby starts to grizzle or cry, it's bedtime.

Other tired signs in babies in the first three months include:

- jerking arms or legs
- frowning
- staring
- yawning
- arching back
- stiffness.

If your baby is older than four months, you might also see them rub their eyes when they're tired.

It is important to learn to read your baby's tired signs and to respond by putting baby down to sleep. If your baby is overtired they will be more difficult to soothe.

How long do I try to settle my baby?

- You can keep trying to settle your baby for up to 30 minutes in the daytime, perhaps even longer at night.
- If your baby doesn't settle after 20 to 30 minutes, pick them up, try another brief feed or cuddle, and then try again.

My baby will not settle!

- If you cannot settle your baby don't worry! Instead, try another activity: pick your baby up and go for a walk, or give your baby a bath and try again at next sleep.
- If you're feeling too tired or angry, it's OK to leave baby in a safe place (such as the cot) for a few minutes and leave the room to calm down.

Re-settling baby

If your baby wakes up from a day nap after less than one hour:

- 1 They have only had one sleep cycle. This is probably not enough sleep so you will need to try to re-settle your baby in the cot.
- 2 Try for up to 30 minutes using your usual settling techniques.
- 3 If baby won't re-settle, don't worry, it doesn't always work. It's time to do something else – go out for a walk, or give your baby a massage or bath.
- 4 Try settling again at the next sleep.

About 15% of babies will cat nap (i.e. have naps lasting less than one hour) during the day. These babies tend to sleep well overnight and re-settling during the day is worth trying but it may not always work.

Dummies

A dummy might help soothe your baby's crying and help them to fall asleep, but it can become a parent-dependent sleep cue. Carefully consider the pros and cons before you decide to use a dummy.

- If your baby isn't old enough to replace their dummy during the night they will probably cry out for help – meaning you will have to attend to them perhaps several times during the night.
- As your baby grows, you might want to wean them off dummies. See raisingchildren.net.au for tips and how to do this.

Wrapping and sleeping position

Wrapping (or swaddling) from birth:

- can help your baby to arouse less and sleep longer
- helps your baby to keep warm (but use a lightweight wrap in warmer weather to prevent overheating)
- can help your baby to settle.

When you wrap your baby for sleep:

- always place them on their back to sleep (the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome [SIDS] is higher if you put your baby on their tummy)
- leave plenty of room for your baby to bend their legs at the hips and knees
- from two to three months your baby will learn to turn over on their own. This means it's time to gradually stop wrapping your baby. From this age, use a firmly tucked in cot sheet or baby sleeping bag.

Safe swaddling

There are three recommended ways to swaddle babies:

- the diamond method,
- the square method,
- the pouch-type wraps

You can learn more about these at raisingchildren.net.au



Safe wrapping with the hips bent and knees apart – diamond method



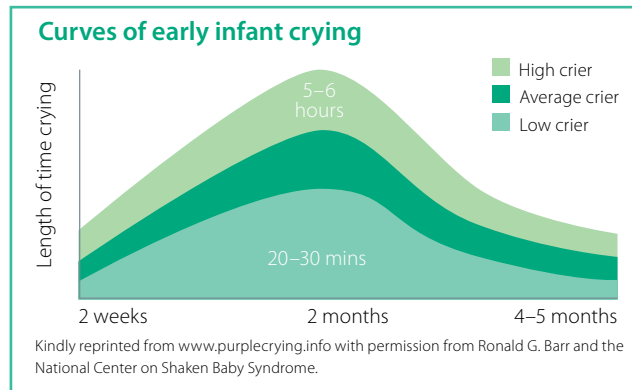
Completed safe wrapping



The first three months

CRYING

The normal crying curve



Normal baby crying patterns

Crying is normal. All babies cry.

- As shown in the diagram, baby crying peaks at about six to eight weeks. At that time, fussing and crying lasts – on average – around two and a half hours a day.
- Crying in the first few months often happens in the late afternoon and early evening (but it can be at any time).
- This peak in crying settles by three to four months.
- These are only averages. Some babies will cry more and some less – there is a broad range of normal crying.

What about colic?

- Colic is often used to describe babies who cry a lot (more than three hours per day for more than three days per week).
- Colic is when a baby cries for no apparent reason and parents can't soothe them or stop them crying easily.
- Colic doesn't always mean something is wrong with baby's tummy.

Over 90% of crying that is difficult to soothe has no medical cause.

TIP

Remember!

Your baby might need to feed during the night until they are around six months old.

Baby hunger signs

Two of the most common causes of crying are tiredness and hunger, but it can be hard to tell whether your baby is hungry or tired.

These tips might be useful:

- Your baby is crying from hunger when they:
 - want long feeds, less than two hourly (not a snack feed)
 - have poor weight gain (less than 20 grams per day over two weeks).
- Your baby will feed whenever food is offered, but that doesn't mean your baby is actually hungry. Like adults, babies can feed just for enjoyment and comfort.
- If you try to feed a tired baby you might encourage a cycle of snack feeds and cat naps during the day – this can result in a grumpy and tired baby.

Medical causes of crying

Fewer than 10% of babies with a lot of difficult-to-soothe crying have a medical cause for their crying. Make an appointment to see your GP or paediatrician if you see the following, as well as difficult-to-soothe crying:

Cow's milk allergy

In addition to crying, a baby with a cow's milk allergy will usually have at least one of the following:

- blood or mucous in their poo
- vomiting in large amounts every day
- eczema
- poor weight gain (less than 20 grams per day on average over one to two weeks)
- someone else in the family with cow's milk or other food allergy.

Reflux

- In addition to crying, a baby with reflux will usually have one of the following:
- feeding difficulties (choking, spluttering, coughing)
- vomiting large amounts four or more times a day, sometimes with blood in the vomit.

We know that ‘silent reflux’ is not a cause of crying in infants.

Lactose intolerance

In addition to crying, a baby with lactose intolerance will also have:

- watery, frothy poo
- ongoing nappy rash.

Different approaches to baby care

There is no single ‘right’ way to manage crying and sleep in the early months. This information can help you to choose the right way for your family.

Remember:

- Most babies do a certain amount of crying that you cannot stop or soothe.
- Unsoothable crying is the same whether you hold your baby a lot or a little.
- Most babies have no obvious reason for unsoothable crying. This unsoothable crying usually settles down as babies grow.
- Unsoothable crying is hard but it is not your fault.

Infant crying problems are almost always a passing phase – they won’t last forever!

Baby myths

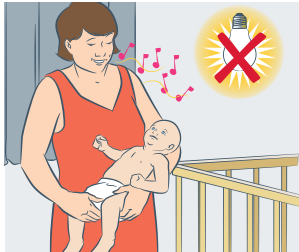
| Myth | Truth |
|---|---|
| My milk is too strong, or too weak | Breast milk is perfectly balanced and cannot be too strong or weak |
| I don’t have enough milk | As long as your baby’s weight gain is on track, you are providing enough milk |
| If I keep my baby up all day they will sleep better at night | Keeping a baby up all day makes your baby overtired and harder to settle |
| My baby is too bright to sleep in the daytime | Even alert babies need day sleeps; over-tired babies will be harder to settle at night |
| If I pick my baby up all the time I will spoil them | You cannot spoil your baby by picking them up, but if your baby always falls asleep when you hold them then it will become a parent-dependent sleep cue |
| I think my baby is teething | Teeth don’t usually erupt until six or seven months |
| If I don’t burp my baby they will not settle | Some cultures don’t burp their babies at all, and these babies still settle. If you choose to burp your baby then limit it to ten minutes if possible, and keep it gentle |
| I should be able to interpret my baby’s cry and understand why they are crying | Some babies cry for no reason at all. Even experienced infant health professionals can’t interpret a baby’s cry – every baby is different |
| Babies should sleep in a light room during the day so they learn to tell day from night | Babies should go to sleep in the same room day and night and this room should be darkened |

If your baby is difficult to soothe



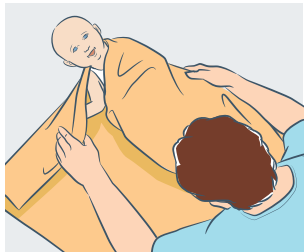
Is baby hungry?

Offer her breast or bottle. If she's fed in the last two hours you can try offering baby something to suck, like a dummy.



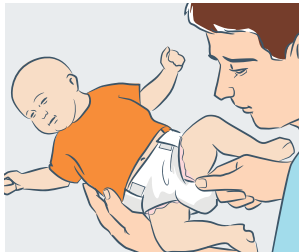
Does baby need holding?

Try holding her in a cradle position or sling. Try gentle rocking, walking with her, whispering or singing. Remember to keep the stimulation low.



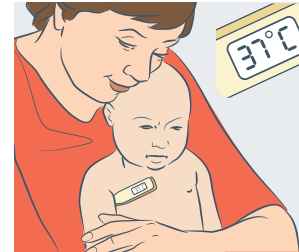
Is baby tired?

Try wrapping her gently but firmly, and put her down to sleep in a safe place. Reduce stimulation by making the room darker and quieter. Try giving your baby a relaxing bath or massage.



Does he have a wet or dirty nappy?

Check if baby's nappy needs changing. If baby has a rash, rinse with clean water, gently pat dry and use a barrier cream.



Is baby sick?

Does he have a fever? Take his temperature – if above 37.5° then talk to your doctor.



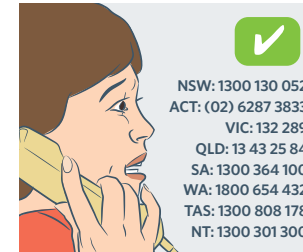
Never shake a baby

It can cause bleeding inside the brain and likely permanent brain damage.



Are you becoming frustrated or distressed?

If you feel you can't cope, place your baby in a safe place and take some time out until you feel calmer. Or ask someone else to hold her for a while.



It's OK to ask for help

If you are having difficulty coping with your baby, call your local Parentline.

**Sourced from the Raising Children Network's comprehensive and quality-assured Australian parenting website www.raisingchildren.net.au*



After
the first
three
months

Sleep and feeding patterns (three to four months)

At three to four months of age, your baby's DAY might involve:

- feeding every three to four hours
- three sleeps per day (with the last afternoon sleep often shorter)
- some 'alert' babies might not sleep very much during the day
- some babies will cat nap (sleep for less than one hour at a time).

Why do babies cat nap?

Often babies will wake up after only one sleep cycle. You might remember from the beginning of this booklet that one sleep cycle is only around 20 to 50 minutes. Your baby might need to be settled back to sleep if they are grumpy or not sleeping well at night. If your baby seems happy and is sleeping well at night, then cat napping might be fine.

At three to four months of age, your baby's NIGHT might involve:

- settling to sleep between 6 and 10pm
- waking up to feed one to two times overnight until about six months of age
- after six months of age, your baby can usually get all the nutrition they need just from daytime feeding.

Rescue and roll-over feeds

Occasionally you might find it really hard to get your baby off to sleep. When this happens, you might want to consider a 'rescue feed', which is a temporary extra feed just before bedtime that aims to help baby relax and prepare for sleep.

Another alternative is a 'roll-over feed'.

TIP Remember!

Only feed your baby until they are drowsy, but never asleep – this helps babies to learn to settle on their own.

TIP

Roll-over feeds only work for 50% of babies.

If roll-over feeds are making no difference after a week, then let your baby sleep until they naturally wake for a feed.

Roll-over or 'dream' feed

- A feed delivered late in the evening (around 10pm to 12 midnight), that aims to stop night feeds between midnight and morning.
- Roll-over feeds can allow you to get more uninterrupted rest.

How can I deliver a roll-over feed?

Deliver the roll-over feed in your baby's bedroom, keep the lights dim, and don't wake your baby (if possible) or change their nappy (unless it is dirty). Keep very quiet and calm, so that your baby will either stay asleep, or quickly fall back to sleep.

Additional resources

Raising Children Network has lots of information and resources to help you manage your baby's sleep and crying. raisingchildren.net.au

For more information about Sudden Unexpected Death in Infants (SUDI and SIDS), search: www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

If your baby is older than six months, online training in two settling techniques – controlled comforting and camping out – is available at www.learninghub.org.au in the Infant Sleep eLearning Program.

