

Good Sleep Habits After 4 Months

Sleep is one of the most important ways your baby grows. Babies need sleep to grow, learn, and keep their brains healthy. **Most babies need 12–16 hours of sleep (including naps) every day.** And caregivers need sleep to care for their babies as well. But newborn sleep is unpredictable. **Babies don't have a day and night schedule yet.** It is exhausting for caregivers!

The tips below can help your baby learn how to fall asleep and stay asleep at night. This will help you get more sleep, too. You can try these ideas when your baby is about 4 months old.

Watch for sleepy signs

Decide when you would like your baby to nap or sleep at night. Then start looking for signs of sleepiness around that time. Babies show signs when they are tired. Look for these clues:

- Yawning
- Rubbing eyes
- Pulling ears
- Fussing or crying
- Getting quiet or slow

When you see these signs, start your bedtime routine

Keep a bedtime routine

A routine means doing the same steps each time. Routines help babies feel safe and calm. A bedtime routine might include:

- A warm bath
- Putting on pajamas
- Reading a book
- Singing a quiet song
- Turning off the lights

Tip: Turn off screens before the bedtime routine. Screens can make it harder for children to calm down. Screen time keeps children up later, and they will wake more at night

Keep bedtime the same

Try to put your child to bed around the same time most nights. Try to use the same naptimes too. This helps your child's body learn when it is time to sleep. An earlier bedtime can help your baby to sleep longer and through the night sooner. Try to put your baby to bed between 6:00–8:00 pm if possible. This can be hard on you, but it is good for healthy sleep.

Put your baby down sleepy, but awake

Around 4 months of age, babies can start learning to fall asleep on their own. This means that you no longer have to rock them or feed them until they fall asleep.

Try putting your baby in the crib when they are sleepy but still awake. This helps them learn to fall asleep on their own. It will also help them fall back asleep when they wake up at night. This might mean that they will fuss in the crib. This is safe for them, but hard for you!



ZERO TO THREE
Early connections last a lifetime



Be ready for crying

Your baby will cry when learning a new sleep skill. This is normal. It is a big change. It helps to have a plan before bedtime. For example:

- You might check on your baby after a few minutes.
- You might tell your neighbors you are practicing sleep, so they know there may be crying.
- You might use a monitor to watch your baby and know they are safe, even if they are crying.

Crying at bedtime does not damage your baby's relationship with you. But it can be hard for caregivers to hear. You don't have to let your baby cry if you don't want to. Discuss what works best for you with your family and child's doctor.

Naps are key

Naps during the day are important. Babies need rest. Caregivers do too! Most babies take 2-3 naps a day in their first year. Babies usually take one nap in the morning and one in the afternoon.

Changes can affect sleep

For example, a baby's sleep habits may change if:

- A parent is away
- A new baby joins the family
- Someone new takes care of the baby
- Your baby learns a new skill, like crawling or walking

These changes may make sleep harder for a short time. Hang in there! Try to keep your routines the same.

Every baby is different

Babies have different temperaments. Some babies develop sleep habits easily. Others need more help to calm down before sleep. Be patient as your baby learns

When to ask for help

You may want extra help if your child is older than 6 months and:

- Has a very hard time falling asleep
- Wakes many times at night

Sleep problems are common in the first year.

With time and practice, most children learn healthy sleep habits.

Have more questions?

Talk to your baby's healthcare provider or one of the professionals supporting your family.

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