

Look after yourself

- Broken sleep makes everyone exhausted and irritable.
- Ask for help from family and friends.
- Get some rest during the day.
- Take a short break from parenting now and then.
- Try to get some regular exercise.

You will get lots of advice. Some people may suggest that you let your baby 'cry it out' or that you use controlled crying/comforting. This is not good for babies. Babies need you to respond when they need you. This helps them to feel safe and secure.

For more information contact

- Local Community Child Health Nurse
- Local Family Doctor
- Ngala Family Resource Centre Helpline
8:00am–8:00pm 7 days a week
Telephone (08) 9368 9368
Outside metro area – Freecall 1800 111 546
www.ngala.com.au
- Parent Help Centre/Parenting Line
Telephone (08) 6279 1200 (24 hr service)
Outside metro area – Freecall 1800 654 432

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request. Please contact childcommunity@health.wa.gov.au

To order this publication and others phone 1300 135 030 or visit www.health.wa.gov.au

© Children, Youth and Women's Health Service, reproduced with permission. The South Australian Government does not accept responsibility for the accuracy of this reproduction. The original version is published at <http://www.cyh.com>

Warning

This document is published as general information only. You should always consult a healthcare professional for diagnosis and treatment of any health condition or symptoms.

Disclaimer

The advice and information contained herein is provided in good faith as a public service. However the accuracy of any statements made is not guaranteed and it is the responsibility of readers to make their own enquiries as to the accuracy, currency and appropriateness of any information or advice provided. Liability for any act or omission occurring in reliance on this document or for any loss, damage or injury occurring as a consequence of such act or omission is expressly disclaimed.



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

Produced by Child and Adolescent Health Service 2009

sleep

3-6 months



Baby sleep

Babies vary a lot in the amount of sleep they need. Between three to six months some babies have two or three longish sleeps during the day, while others just have short naps. A few sleep 12 hours at night without interruption, some manage eight hours while many others wake fairly regularly for feeds. Most have learned to sleep more at night than they do during the day.

If you are happy with your baby's sleep pattern, there is no need to change it. There are many ways to be 'normal'.

Responding to your baby's cues of when she needs to sleep, or play, or feed, or be cuddled, is important in helping develop secure attachment (see also the topic '**Attachment**').

Sleeping in the same room with parents is safest for babies.

Daytime and night time patterns

By this age your baby will be starting to learn about the difference between day and night.

- You can help your baby get into a daytime pattern. After he has had a feed, play with him for a while, so that he does not go to sleep straight after a feed. Babies who go to sleep straight after a feed may get into the pattern of needing a feed at night to go back to sleep. Remember to respond to cues of when your baby is ready to play, and when he is tired.

- Watch your baby for signs that he is tired, or for signs that he wants to play, so that the pattern best meets his needs.
- There are lots of things that you can do during play time at this age, such as cuddles, a walk, time on the floor or in a baby seat with toys, going shopping, or visiting.
- These play times will help your baby to learn that daytime is the time to be awake.
- During the day, your baby will usually have two or three sleeps. It is a good idea not to let him sleep for too long (perhaps no more than two hours) especially late in the day, as he may not sleep as long during the night. You may want to wake him gently when you see him stirring.
- At night time, do not have play times – keep feed times 'boring' and settle him straight back to sleep.

Ideas for settling

- Place your baby on her back in the bassinet or cot.
- Use a dummy if your baby is used to one.
- Pat your baby, or jiggle the cot in a regular rhythm. You may need to pat or rock quickly at first, then slow down as your baby calms down.
- Sing to your baby, or put on the radio. Other regular noises such as the washing machine or dryer can help.

- You could darken the room for night sleeps. Day sleep could be in a brighter, noisier place – but if this does not work try the darker, quieter place.
- Some babies settle better if wrapped fairly firmly in a thin cotton sheet with the arms wrapped in too, while others do not like this, and settle better if they can use their hands to soothe themselves.
- Your baby will learn about going to sleep more quickly if you try to use the same settling ideas each time, day or night.

Night time

It is still normal for babies to have feeds during the night.

- You could try a 'roll-over' feed at about 10:00pm, before you go to bed, and this may help your baby to sleep longer. Disturb her as little as possible. Lift her without fully waking her and feed. If bottle feeding, give the feed without picking her up, but stay with her while she feeds.
- Some babies start waking again at night when their appetite increases. This extra feed increases the breast milk supply. They usually settle again when they are having more food.
- Babies have some 'growing' times when they are more fussy.

