

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**
See inside your baby's purple 'All About Me' book
Look in the phone directory under 'Child Health Centres'
Visit www.healthywa.wa.gov.au
- **Local family doctor**
- **Ngala Helpline**
8:00am–8:00pm 7 days a week
Telephone (08) 9368 9368
Outside metro area – Freecall 1800 111 546*
www.ngala.com.au
- **Parenting WA Line**
Freecall 1800 654 432* (24 hour service)
www.dlgc.wa.gov.au/parents
- **Raising Children Network**
www.raisingchildren.net.au

- **Kidsafe WA**
8:30am–5:00pm (Monday to Friday)
Telephone (08) 9340 8509
Outside metro area – Freecall 1800 802 244*
www.kidsafewa.com.au
- **SIDS and Kids WA**
Telephone (08) 9474 3544
Outside metro area - Freecall 1800 199 466*
www.sidsandkidswa.org

*Calls made from a mobile may be charged at a timed rate.

This topic may use 'he' and 'she' in turn - please change to suit your child's sex.

This information, along with other child health information, is available in electronic format at www.healthywa.wa.gov.au

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Produced by Child and Adolescent Health Service 2012
Revised August 2013

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.

Sleeping baby in a safe cot next to the parents' bed for the first 6–12 months reduces the risk of sudden unexpected death in infancy, including SIDS, as long as the room is smoke free.

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. 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.

- 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 and soothing

- Place your baby on her back in the bassinet or cot.
- 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. Stop before your baby goes to sleep.
- 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. The wrap should not be too tight and must allow chest wall, hip and leg movement.
- If your baby has reached the rolling over milestone, wrapping is not recommended as it may lead to suffocation.
- Your baby will learn about going to sleep more quickly if you try to use the same settling ideas each time, day or night.

For more information on this, refer to SIDS and Kids website listed at the end of this information.

Night time

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

- You could try a 'late feed or sleepy 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.
- 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.