



THE BOOK I MADE

BABIES

A practical guide to caring for your baby, including information on development, sleeping routines and how to introduce solids.

SUITABLE FOR **3-12** MONTHS



Behaviour

The basics of baby behaviour

Connecting and communicating

Connecting with your baby
How to 'talk' to your baby

Development

How your baby is growing

Health

Common health problems
Six tips for staying healthy

Daily care

Teeth care and nappies
Bathtime, nails and clothes

Nutrition

Feeding babies up to six months old
Introducing solids

Play and learning

Playing with your baby
How your baby learns

Safety

How to keep your baby safe

Sleep

Sleep patterns
Good sleep habits

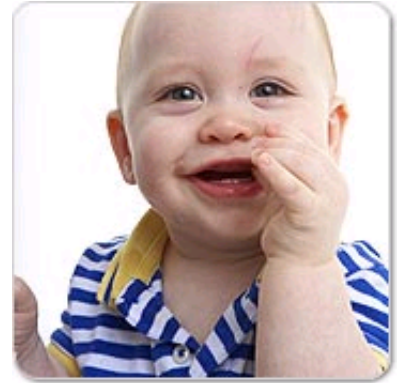
The basics of baby behaviour

By three months, your baby has developed some impressive capabilities. When he smiles at you, it's not just wind. It actually means something.

If you smile at a baby, he will probably smile back. Scowl at him and he may burst into tears. You can learn a lot about what your baby is feeling by looking at his face.

What baby is feeling

The world is starting to make some sense. Your baby has expectations and the unexpected can upset him. He is very attached to certain people and things. He may love one toy over all others and will accept no substitutes.



He has a favourite person (usually Mum or Dad). He understands where he ends and you start. He may also recognise his name or his face in the mirror. He may be scared if you leave the room because you might not come back. A terrifying thought!

Your baby is busy soaking up the world. Just like his parents, he appreciates a bit of down time in his day to relax and be comforted.

What baby is doing

He wants to discover and explore. His natural curiosity will drive him to experiment with objects to see how they work. Even light and gravity are things he has to figure out. This may involve dropping your phone in the cat's water dish or tipping the sugar bowl onto the rug. He'll watch your reactions to see if he's doing the right thing. He'll also do things like pinching, biting or hair pulling just to find out what happens.

Babies are born to experiment. Their behaviour is part of an innocent learning process – he is not purposely testing your patience. You will just need to create a safe environment for his exploration so he doesn't hurt himself or break your new DVD player. Boundaries start with keeping no-no things out of reach. Eventually, you can tell your baby which things are off limits.

Your baby is figuring out how to find his way in the world – and you are his navigator. He will learn a lot about how to behave by watching you. Your years as an important and influential role model have begun.

Discipline

Smacking is not an effective or acceptable punishment for a child, no matter what age. For a baby, smacking just causes confusion and fear. He may even start to flinch or cry when that person comes near him. Smacking a baby to stop him crying will only make him harder to comfort.

Crying is still your baby's main way of communicating needs. If you attend to your baby's needs

promptly, he will tend to feel safer and will actually cry less.

Some parents may hit their child because they are trying to relieve their own tension or stress in a situation. For more help with managing stress and angry feelings, read [Feeling stressed](#) and [When you feel you might hurt your child](#).

Until the age of 12 months, babies have almost no awareness of their own behaviour. To prepare for the toddler years, read our [12 tips for encouraging good behaviour](#).

Connecting and communicating

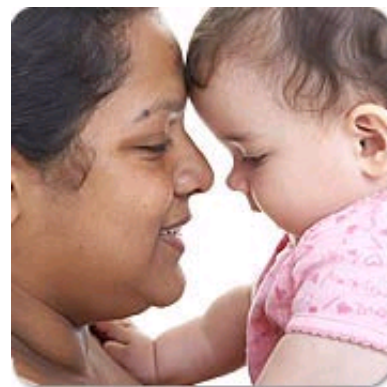
Connecting with your baby

Connecting with your baby means communicating with your eyes, your voice and some comforting cuddles.

Getting to know each other has moved to an exciting new level. Your baby can now see better and understand more about 'her' people. She has emotions and is not afraid to show them.

Whether you're singing a song or talking about what's for dinner, your communication is helping baby learn and develop. Talking to her teaches her about language and [the more talk, the better](#).

By nine months, your baby's memory improves and she is getting attached to people and objects. To help her understand how things disappear and reappear, you can give her lots of physical attention and verbal reminders of where you are as you move around a room. A fun game of 'peekaboo' can also do the trick.



How to 'talk' to your baby

Babyhood is a time for plenty of face-pulling (you *and* baby), conversations that nobody understands (but everyone loves) and the power of the smile. Babies spend their days looking at people's faces and listening to them talk.

'Hellooo sweetie baaabee'

Researchers call the special way we talk to babies '[parentese](#)'. And babies love it. Researchers have found that infants prefer parentese to adult conversation. This high pitched, sing-song speech, with exaggerated facial expressions, may help infants learn the sounds of language.

Making eye contact

Your baby loves watching how your face reacts to something she has done. Researchers say it helps her understand the world and form relationships. When your baby deliberately catches your eye, you can look right back into her eyes. And keep maintaining that eye contact until

she looks away. When she makes noises, you can encourage her. Smiling, nodding and encouraging her abilities ('What did you say?', 'Aren't you talking well!') all help your baby to keep communicating.

Talk, baby, talk

As your baby moves closer to 12 months, she may start to babble. When she begins to make lovely little sounds ('ba ba ba', 'da da da'), you may want to try repeating them back to her. Try not to interrupt until she's finished with her 'sentence'. Also, repeating what you say to her ('Are you hungry?' 'You're hungry, aren't you?' 'Ohhh, I'm hungry!') can teach your baby what words mean.

Baby sign language

Baby sign language is a fun and simple way for you to communicate with your baby before she can talk. You can start introducing the simple signs for 'milk', 'more', 'food' and 'water' at six months old. Your baby may start using basic signs as early as 9-12 months old.

Development

How your baby is growing

All babies develop in the same order but at completely different rates. So while one seven-month-old is crawling around and chattering madly, another may be playing silently on his playmat.

Your baby's development happens in fits and starts. He loves to keep you guessing about what he will do next. He may crawl for months and then suddenly decide to walk. Some weeks, you may witness amazing changes and then it stops, and sometimes he even goes backwards a bit. This is quite normal and nothing to worry about. His development process soon kick-starts again.

How your baby's brain is developing

Your baby's everyday life affects how his brain develops. Lots of love, attention and interesting experiences do wonders for his brain growth, learning and development.

- Two to six months: Baby's eyesight is really improving. He begins to connect what he sees with what he hears, tastes and feels. By watching how you react to his emotions and by seeing you express your feelings, he's starting to recognise when he feels happy, sad, excited or fearful.
- Six to nine months: He is developing ideas about who he is and working out the difference between parents, caregivers, strangers, adults and children. He has positive and negative emotions and knows how to express them. He can let you know when he wants help. By nine months, a growth spurt in his brain means he can



make associations between what he sees, hears, tastes and feels.

- Nine to 12 months: His ability to experience different emotions and moods has developed a lot. As the front of his brain develops, he is better able to entertain and reassure himself with familiar objects and people. He is able to move away from things that upset or annoy him.

What your baby may be doing

All babies develop at a different rate. Your baby may reach some of the milestones later. Don't worry, they nearly always catch up. You know your baby best. If you are worried about his development, get professional advice.

By four months, he can:

- lift head up 90 degrees when lying on his stomach
- laugh out loud
- follow an object in an arc about 15 cm above the face for 180 degrees (from one side to the other)

By six months, he can:

- keep head level with body when pulled to sitting
- say 'ah goo' or similar vowel consonant combinations

By nine months, he can:

- work to get to a toy out of reach
- look for dropped object

By 12 months, he can:

- walk holding on to furniture

Find more detailed month-by-month information on [what your baby may be doing](#).



Common health problems

As your baby's on-call nurse, you'll want to know when it is time to call for the doctor.

Signs of serious illness

Illness can quickly turn worse in babies. Call your doctor if you see any of the following signs in your baby. If your child shows more than one of these signs, seek urgent medical attention.

- Drowsiness (your baby is less alert than usual)
- Decreased movement or lethargy (she is less active and just wants to lie around)
- Breathing difficulty
- Poor circulation (she looks paler than usual or even blue, maybe cold hands and feet)
- Poor feeding
- Poor urine output (less than four wet nappies in 24 hours)



Seek urgent medical attention if your baby:

- vomits green fluid
- has a convulsion (a fit). Try not to panic. Gently place your baby on her side, allowing her to move freely
- stops breathing for more than 15 seconds
- has a lump in the groin area (a hernia)
- has a rash on her legs
- has a high [fever](#) (a temperature of more than 38° C).

Common health problems

Babies are prone to a variety of health issues such as [colds and sniffles](#), [diarrhoea](#), [constipation](#), [asthma](#) and [ear infections](#). Some conditions require no treatment while others may need prescription medications. See your doctor for advice and look up the [A-Z Health Reference](#) for information about other common conditions.

Six tips for staying healthy

1. Keep up immunisations

[Immunisation](#) protects us against bacteria and viral nasties, such as measles and diphtheria, that once killed thousands of people. Immunisation is considered essential protection for your baby. Babies can be immunised by a GP or at a baby health centre at:

- four months
- six months
- 12 months

The [Maternity Immunisation Allowance](#) is only payable once you have followed the immunisation recommendations.

2. Protect against germs

Up to six months old, a close encounter with germs can mean a trip to the hospital for your baby if she gets sick and develops a fever. You can try to limit her exposure to germs by washing your hands before touching her, especially if you've been out shopping, handling raw food or changing her nappy. If someone around her has a cold or flu, you may want to ask them to stay out of range until they are better.



3. Don't give unprescribed medications

Normal household medicine can be deadly to a baby. That's why it is important not to give any medication to your baby unless it is prescribed for her by your doctor. Some herbal remedies can also be dangerous, so it's best to check with a doctor to be safe.

4. Keep her air clean

'Secondhand smoke' can cause serious health risks to non-smokers. If someone in your house smokes, they can protect your baby by always smoking outside. Avoid using chemical household sprays, like insect repellent or cleaning products, when your baby is in the room.



5. Protect her ears

Your baby's ears are delicate, so protect her from loud sounds very close to her ears. An excited older child yelling in her ear, a barking dog or blasting music can all do damage.

6. Prevent tooth decay

The best way to care for your [baby's new teeth](#) is to watch what she eats and drinks. When she starts on solids and drinks other than breastmilk, avoid giving her fruit juice and sweets, which can promote tooth decay. When offering her a drink of water, use tap water – the fluoride added to it helps build up tooth enamel (even in her permanent teeth that are developing under the surface) so it is a very important part of preventing expensive dental repair later.

Daily care

Teeth care and nappies

By the time your newborn becomes a baby, you've probably got clothes, nappies and bathtime down pat. But now there are teeth to think of.

Teeth care

Most babies get their first teeth between six to 10 months, although a few don't get them till about 12 months. You can start cleaning baby's teeth as soon as they appear. You can use a clean washcloth to gently rub the teeth clean twice a day. After breakfast and before bed are good times to give it a go.

Toothpaste, even the baby variety, is not recommended until baby is two years old.



Nappies

Nappy changes become less frequent as baby gets older although you can still expect at least six to eight changes a day. Remember: lots of wet nappies is a good sign – it shows that baby is getting all the fluids she needs.

And don't be surprised if her nappies become a little more 'whiffy' – it's common for poo to get more smelly when babies start eating solids.



Changing nappies

As baby gets stronger and quicker, constant rolling and kicking can turn nappy changing into an endurance test. The main thing is to get through it as quickly as possible and make sure baby is safe at all times.

If baby won't stay still during [nappy changing](#), try distracting her with a song or a favourite toy.



Nappy rash

To avoid nappy rash, change your baby's nappy as soon as possible after a poo (you may need to check with a sniff or quick peek). Poo is acidic and can actually 'burn' the skin which (aside from other obvious reasons) is why you want to change a 'number two' nappy straight away. You can apply a dollop of nappy rash cream right where it counts

to prevent rashes. If her skin is raw with severe nappy rash don't wipe but rinse with water instead and gently pat dry. If you can give it some air time by letting her go bare bottom for a little while, that can help it heal. If not, apply lots of nappy rash cream to create a barrier and check the rash to make sure it is healing.

Bathtime, nails and clothes

Until baby is about six months, you can continue washing her in a little tub (or even the kitchen sink!). But as soon as she can sit up, you can move to the regular family bath. This is also when babies can become more adventurous so ensure [bath safety](#) is kept top-of-mind at all times.

You can [bathe baby](#) each evening or less frequently provided she has a daily top and tail. Stick with non-soap cleanser (it won't irritate the skin like soap can) and follow the basic 'wash order' you used when she was a newborn:

- Wash the face first
- The body second
- The genitals last



Remember: Baby girls' genitals should be washed front to back to avoid urinary infections.

Nails

To trim nails, you can use a small pair of ordinary nail scissors or child nail clippers. (You can try a nail file but beware of filing delicate fingertip skin.) If you feel up to using nail clippers, then be careful to gently press and hold the fingertip skin away from the nail when clipping. And remember to stop as soon as baby protests or pulls her hand away and pick up again later or when she is sleeping. A treat or a favourite toy could help her get over a bit of anxiety. Even if you just want to press on with it, it's not worth it if she is likely to develop a fear of it, which will make nail trimming almost impossible when she gets older.

Remember with toe nails to always clip straight across, never rounding the edges which can lead to ingrown toenails.

Clothes

Although your baby is no longer a newborn, it's still a good idea to keep clothes as practical as possible. Stretchy body suits, t-shirt tops, cotton elastic waist pants and tops with envelope necks that stretch over heads make dressing and undressing easier. Read up on [dressing a baby](#) for more ideas.

As she gets older and is sleeping less, you'll probably get out and about more. So make sure she has a hat and other sun smart clothes that will [protect her from harmful UV rays](#).

Nutrition

Feeding babies up to six months old

Breastmilk or formula offers all the nutrition a baby needs until she is six months. By about that age, she's ready for her first spoonful of solids.

Breastfeeding is great for your baby. According to health experts, [breastmilk](#) is all your baby needs until she is six months old. It is worth making every effort to breastfeed, and most problems can be overcome with information and support. However, for some mothers, issues such as mastitis make it difficult to continue breastfeeding. If you can't breastfeed, feeding your baby formula from a bottle is the next best thing. Cow's milk, goat's milk and soy milk are not suitable for children under 12 months – these products don't have all the nutritional elements a baby needs to grow and thrive.

If you have to go [back to work](#) you can continue breastfeeding, but plan to slowly start introducing your baby to a bottle or cup before you start back. There are options for whether you [express](#) and refrigerate or freeze your milk, or whether you partially [wean](#).

For more information about breastfeeding, bottle-feeding and nutrition (yours and your baby's), see the sections [Newborns Nutrition](#) and [Babies Nutrition](#).



Introducing solids

You can start slowly [introducing her to solids](#) at around six months. It's wise to introduce foods one at a time (this can help identify food allergies or intolerances) starting with a little bit of very milky baby cereal (mixed with breastmilk or formula).

Here's a quick guide to what foods you can introduce and when:

- Six months: Baby is ready to try a world of different tastes and flavours. Along with baby cereal, available from the supermarket, you could also offer cooked pureed fruit (apple, pear) or vegetables (potato, pumpkin, carrot). See our [homemade baby foods](#) guide for how to make your own.
- Seven months: You can try introducing some lumpier food and broaden the variety offered.
- Eight months: Time for a bit more coarsely mashed food, like minced meat, chicken, rice. You can also introduce [finger foods](#) such as soft fruit, soft-cooked vegies and toast, and also grated cheese (pasteurised) and yoghurt.
- 12 months: At this age, you can cut up in small pieces a little of what the rest of the family is eating so you can share the same meals.

All babies are different and this time frame is just a guide. If a food gets knocked back one week, try it again next week. Babies can be offered a new food many times before deciding to try it. There's no point trying to force a child to eat anything. Avoiding fussing or worrying is the best way to establish good habits and avoid later problems.



When babies are between 9-12 months you can put healthy leftovers in a blender and reduce to a textured pulp. Spoon into ice cube trays or small plastic containers and freeze for quick meals later in the week.

Food and milk schedule after 6 months

Once baby is eating well, you can start a meal schedule. Your schedule may look like this:

Time of day	Meal
Early morning	Breastfeed or bottle
Mid morning	Breakfast and breastfeed or bottle
Early afternoon	Lunch and breastfeed or bottle
Early evening	Dinner and breastfeed or bottle
Late evening	Breastfeed or bottle (if needed)

This means 4-5 milk feeds a day. You can reduce this to three milk feeds as your baby starts to eat more solid food (between 6-9 months). Of course, your baby's own milk intake may vary from this.

Fussy eaters

A fussy eater can cause all sorts of angst for worried parents. Fighting over food with babies can lead to eating problems later. As a parent, you are responsible for offering a variety of healthy food; your baby decides how much of it to eat.

Foods to avoid

- Salt, sugar or caffeine. Babies' systems can't handle foods high in salt or sugar, or foods with caffeine (found in cola drinks and chocolate).
- Juice is expensive and high in sugar. It's better for babies to get their nutrition straight from fruit. If baby is thirsty, plain tap water is best – it's fortified with fluoride which helps build enamel on her developing teeth.
- Honey and unpasteurised dairy products may contain dangerous bacteria and are unsuitable for babies under one year.
- Cow's milk, goat's milk and soy milk are not suitable for children under 12 months – babies need the nutrients from breastmilk or formula.
- Biscuits and sweets. If you can avoid the temptation to give your child biscuits and lollies (at least until she is two), you can congratulate yourself and may be rewarded with fewer mealtime battles.



Microwaving tip

Try to avoid microwaving milk and food in plastic bottles or bowls, unless they are specifically marked as 'microwave safe'. When you microwave pureed food, be sure to stir and heat further – microwaves make 'hot spots' which could burn your baby, and 'cold spots' where bacteria may have survived. Stirring can overcome this.

Play and learning

Playing with your baby

Playing is one of the best things you and your baby can do together. It's how he develops a sense of himself and his place in the world.

Baby games

- Make noise together. Gently bang pots and pans, sing a noisy song (see [Baby Karaoke](#) for some ideas), make animal sounds ('The cow goes 'Mooooooo').
- Start reading. Babies use books to chew on, play with in the bath, discover new textures and, sometimes, even look at. By reading together often, your baby will soon realise that books are a lovely way to spend special time together.
- Explore safely. Create safe places in your home where



your baby can explore his world and work on his latest skills of sitting up, crawling, pulling up, opening cupboards, picking things up, throwing them and putting them in his mouth, and, eventually, walking.

- Play simple games. Games like pat-a-cake, peekaboo and 'this little piggy went to market' are a real laugh for a giggling baby. They can also do a lot to help his learning and movement skills. Tickle his tummy and show him how to blow raspberries. Splash around together in a shallow bath on a warm day. Fill a small juice bottle with buttons to make a rattle. The list is as long as your imagination.
- Bits and pieces. You can develop your baby's imagination slowly by giving him odds and ends to play with. Try a box of coloured bits of cloth and some empty egg cartons.

Television is not recommended for babies under two. If the TV must be on, try to limit his viewing time to short stints (10 minutes a day) of educational, baby-friendly programs such as Play School.

When does play start?

Play starts from birth. As your child grows and develops, play changes from you playing with your baby, to the baby gradually learning how to play with objects and – eventually – other children.

How your baby learns

Everything is new to your baby – things we take for granted are a first time novelty for a them. Let them discover and get bored at their own pace. You can introduce toys slowly, one at a time, after he has tried to squeeze every use out of the one he is already playing with. This helps him develop his learning and attention skills.

Your baby has just picked up a rattle in his tiny hand. He moves his arm. The rattle jerks and makes an intriguing sound. Your baby moves his hand again. The rattle makes the sound. He moves his hand with great purpose. The rattle shakes noisily. Your baby has just made an exciting connection. He has discovered that when he shakes a rattle, he can produce a noise. He has learned that he can make something happen. He has control over some small part of his world.

Babies are even learning things automatically, like:

- how to fall asleep at a certain time of day (this is based on their internal body clock)
- how to get what they need (and, later, want)
- how to eat food
- how to breathe through their mouth when their noses are blocked by a cold.

Exploring is one of the ways your baby learns. It's your job to make his frontier safe. That means the word 'no' can be kept to a minimum when your baby is poking around, because you have made it safe for him.

How to keep your baby safe

Look out, baby's about. As babies become more mobile, keeping your home safe becomes a fulltime job for a while.

Small babies can be surprisingly quick, especially after five months old. She is not ready to learn about the dangers yet, so you will need to keep her out of harm's way.

Eventually, you will be able to tell your baby which things are off limits and help her learn a safe way around. Teaching your child to go down stairs backwards, over and over again, will help her protect herself. You could also start using a word like 'ouch' whenever she has a minor mishap so she can start to learn what it means. Then you can use that same word to warn her of things that might cause the same sensation such as a hot oven or a sharp edge.



In the meantime, to make your home safe for your baby, you can try to prepare in advance. Some new parents even 'borrow' a friend's baby for an hour to test run which areas of their home need 'baby proofing'.

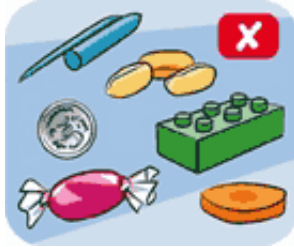


But before you spend up big on the latest safety 'whatsit' or gadgets, remember that SUPERVISION IS THE ONLY RELIABLE PREVENTION AGAINST ACCIDENTS.

Around the house

- Never shake a baby. Even playfully throwing a baby in the air can injure her fragile spinal column and brain. There are telltale signs of shaken baby syndrome, no matter how it occurs.
- Baby walkers are dangerous and are known to cause accidents. They do not help a baby learn how to walk or balance. Any entertainment value a baby gets from a walker is outweighed by the high possibility of injury.
- Babies love to climb so make sure your furniture is stable, especially bookcases and TV pedestals or cabinets. If furniture is wobbly, remove it from the house or fix it to the wall.
- Curtain tie-backs and window blind cords can strangle a curious little Tarzan. Remove them or hook them well out of reach.
- Babies love to grab tablecloths and pull themselves up. When you make a well deserved cuppa, keep it out of reach and off the table.
- Install a safety gate at the top and bottom of stairs and make sure they are always securely closed.

- Keep medicines, cleaning fluids and other poisons locked away in high cupboards well out of the reach of inquisitive little hands.
- Prevent scalds by turning down your hot water system to 50° C.
- Be prepared for emergencies by keeping a list of numbers by your phone. Keep a well stocked first aid kit and consider doing a first aid course which covers techniques such as CPR.



Choking

It's normal for babies to put things in their mouths – be it food, toys or Mum's favourite earrings – so regularly scan the house for small objects that may be choking hazards. Older children may enjoy a daily hunt to help look for small toy parts or other potentially dangerous objects lying around. Things to look out for include:

- coins
- marbles
- pen lids
- jewellery
- small bits of construction toys
- hardened pieces of food on the floor
- anything smaller than a D-size battery

And make sure you know what to do if baby is choking.

In the bedroom

- Nappy changes: When changing baby, be sure to keep one hand on her all the time so she doesn't fall. And never leave her unattended on a change table – she can squirm or wriggle off in seconds.
- Sleep safety: Keep pillows, fluffy toys, cot bumpers and other soft things out of her cot to prevent SIDS and suffocation.

In the kitchen

- A dangling toaster cord is tempting to pull so keep appliance cords from hanging over the edge of the bench.
- When cooking, turn saucepan handles inwards and use the back stove elements (rather than the front ones) when possible. Do not hold your baby while you're cooking.
- Keep washing up liquid, insect sprays and other chemicals locked away and up high.

In the bathroom

Never leave your baby alone in the bath, even for a second. It takes no time for a baby to drown and it is both quick and silent. Make sure you have everything you need when you start. If you need to leave the bathroom to get something, take her with you.

Heat bath water to between 37°C and 38°C and be VERY careful when adding hot water to

warm up the bath – baby can very easily reach out or slip into the stream of burning water.

It's also wise to lock up medicines and keep soaps up high, out of baby's reach.

In the car and outside

- Always buckle up baby in the proper car restraints appropriate to her age and size. Never travel with her on your knee.
- Don't be tempted to leave her in the car while you pop into the shop – it is against the law. Babies overheat very quickly in cars so always take her with you.
- When outdoors, [remember the sunscreen and a hat](#). Babies burn very easily so look for a sunscreen with a high protection factor and take the opportunity at this early age to make a habit of wearing a hat for all outside play.

Sleep

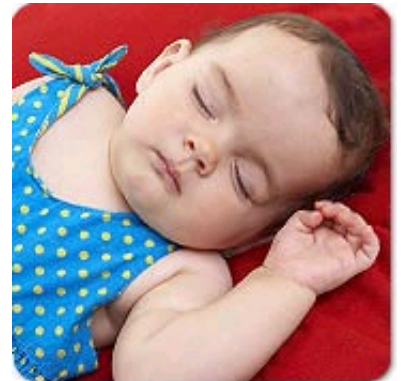
Sleep patterns

A comforting bedtime routine may lead to a better night's sleep for your baby and for you.

By the time your baby is three months old, he will tend to sleep more at night and stay awake longer during the day. But it is amazing just how different babies can be. Some will sleep for hours on end. Others hardly seem to sleep at all. There's no such thing as normal when it comes to sleeping babies.

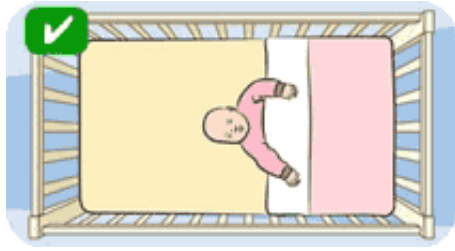
Average sleep pattern for babies

All guides to babies' sleep patterns are just that – a guide. You know your baby best. If he is awake and happy, he has had enough sleep. If he is awake and unhappy, he may need more sleep. If your baby is having trouble falling asleep, try the [patting settling technique](#) or read more about [solving sleep problems](#).



Age	Day sleeps	Night sleeps
3-6 months	2 or 3 sleeps of up to 2 hours each	May still wake at least once during the night
7-12 months	2-3 hours total, usually taken as a morning sleep and an afternoon sleep	Between 6 pm and 10 pm until 5 am or later

Dropping off to sleep is one thing most babies can cleverly do for themselves. To learn more about the basics of baby sleep, you may want to first read [Newborn Sleep](#), which includes ways to help your baby put himself to sleep.



Moving baby to a cot

If your baby has been sleeping with you for the first three months, you may want to move him to his own cot. With a little luck, this will go without a hitch and your baby will doze off happily when you put him into his cot. If, however, your baby is having trouble adjusting to bedtime without you, read [Toward independent sleep](#).

Good sleep habits

Bedtime routines

By the time baby is six months old, he will appreciate the soothing 'sameness' of a bedtime routine. Babies love routine and it won't take long for him to understand what is expected. A typical bedtime routine might look like this:

1. dinner
2. bath time
3. short playtime
4. last feed of the day (breast or formula)
5. nappy change
6. quiet time with you in his bedroom (reading a book or telling a story)
7. into the cot while singing a lullaby such as [Rock-a-Bye Baby](#)
8. say goodnight
9. lights out or night-light on (whatever he is used to)

At six months, there is no need for a feed during the night. Some parents find that a feed around 10 pm (called a rollover feed), just before they go to bed themselves, helps baby sleep longer through the night. You know your baby better than anyone, so you decide.

Night waking

All babies wake during the night as part of their normal sleep cycle. Problems start when they can't get back to sleep without your help. Every night, many parents suffer the sudden jolt awake as they tune in to their little night owl's cries. Once a baby knows how to fall back to sleep by themselves, everybody in the house can enjoy nights of relatively unbroken rest.

To help your baby figure out how to put herself to sleep, it is best to put her to bed while she is sleepy but still awake. If she can learn to go to sleep without your involvement, she is more likely to drop off again by herself if she wakes during the night. This means putting her into her bed before she falls asleep on your lap or on the bottle.

Nearly 50% of babies under 15 months wake at night. If regular night waking is becoming a problem for you, try using the tips in the [guide to solving sleep problems](#).