

Newborn Babies and Sleep

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Sleep Solution*

Congratulations on the birth of your new baby.

This is a glorious time in your life - and a sleepless time too. Newborns have different sleep needs than older babies. This article will help you understand your baby's developing sleep patterns, and will help you create reasonable expectations for sleep.



The Biology of Newborn Sleep

During the early months of your baby's life, he sleeps when he is tired - it's that simple. You can do little to force a new baby to sleep when he doesn't want to sleep, and you can do little to wake him up when he is sleeping soundly.

Newborn babies have tiny tummies. They grow rapidly, and their liquid diet digests quickly. While it would be nice to lay your little bundle down at bedtime and not hear from him until morning, this is not a realistic goal for a new baby. Newborns need to be fed every two to four hours - and sometimes more.

Sleeping "through the night"

You may believe that babies should start "sleeping through the night" soon after birth. For a new baby, a *five-hour stretch* is a full night. This may be a far cry from what you may have thought "sleeping through the night" meant!

What's more, some sleep-through-the-nighters will suddenly begin waking more frequently, and it's often a full year or more until your baby will settle into an all-night, every night sleep pattern.

Falling Asleep at the Breast or Bottle

It is natural for a newborn to fall asleep while sucking at the breast, a bottle, or a pacifier. When a baby *always* falls asleep this way, he learns to associate sucking with falling asleep; over time, he cannot fall asleep any other way. This is the most natural sleep association a baby can have. However, many parents who are struggling with older babies who cannot fall asleep, or stay asleep, are fighting this powerful association.

Therefore, if you want your baby to be able to fall asleep without your help, it is essential that you often let your newborn baby suck until he is sleepy, but not totally asleep. When you can, remove the breast, bottle, or pacifier from his mouth, and let him finish falling asleep without

it. If you do this often enough, he will learn how to fall asleep without sucking.

Waking for Night Feedings

Many professionals recommend that a newborn shouldn't sleep longer than four hours without feeding, and most babies wake more frequently than that. The key is to learn when you should pick her up for a feeding and when you can let her go back to sleep on her own.

Here's a tip: Babies make many sleeping sounds, from grunts to whimpers to cries, and these noises don't always signal awakening. These are *sleeping noises*, and your baby is not awake during these episodes.

Learn to differentiate between sleeping sounds and awake sounds. If she is awake and hungry, you'll want to feed her so she'll go back to sleep easily. But if she's asleep - let her sleep!



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Help Your Baby Distinguish Day from Night

A newborn sleeps 16 to 18 hours per day, and this sleep is distributed evenly over 6 to 7 sleep periods. You can help your baby distinguish between night sleep and day sleep, and thus help him sleep longer periods at night.

Have your baby take his daytime naps in a lit room where he can hear the noises of the day. Make nighttime sleep dark and quiet, except for white noise (a background hum). You can also

help your baby differentiate day from night by using a bath and a change into pajamas to signal the difference between the two.

Watch for Signs of Tiredness

Get familiar with your baby's sleepy signals and put her down to sleep as soon as she seems tired. A baby who is encouraged to stay awake when her body is craving sleep is an unhappy baby. Over time, this pattern develops into sleep deprivation, which complicates developing sleep maturity.

Learn to read your baby's sleepy signs -- such as quieting down, losing interest in people and toys, and fussing -- and put her to bed when that window of opportunity presents itself.

Make Yourself Comfortable

It's a fact that your baby *will* be waking you up, so you may as well make yourself as comfortable as possible. Relax about night wakings right now. The situation will improve day by day; and before you know it, your newborn won't be so little anymore - she'll be walking and talking and getting into everything in sight...during the day, and sleeping peacefully all night long.



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Co-Sleeping Safely

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Sleep Solution*

The family bed, co-sleeping, shared sleep—no matter what you call it, it means that your child sleeps with you. Sharing sleep is popular with parents (particularly nursing mothers) of babies who wake throughout the night, since it allows parents to avoid getting up out of bed and traveling up and down a dark hallway. Co-sleeping is common with parents of older babies who enjoy the nighttime closeness. If you decide to have your baby sleep with you, either for naps or at nighttime, you should adhere to the following safety guidelines:



- Your bed must be safe for your baby. The best choice is a flat, firm mattress on the floor, with no crevices between mattress and wall or furniture. Don't use soft surfaces such as a waterbed, sofa, or deep pillow-top mattress.
- Make certain that fitted sheets stay smooth and secure and cannot be pulled loose.
- If your bed is raised off the floor, use mesh guardrails to prevent Baby from rolling off the bed, and be careful that there is no space between the mattress and headboard or footboard. (Some guardrails designed for older children are not safe for babies.)
- If your bed is placed against a wall or furniture, check *every night* to be sure there is no space where your baby could become stuck.
- Position an infant between Mother and the wall or guardrail. Fathers, siblings, and grandparents may not have the same awareness of a baby's location as mothers do.
- Use a large mattress to provide ample room for everyone's movement.

- Make certain that the room your baby sleeps in, and any room he might have access to, is child-safe.
- Do not ever sleep with your baby if you have been drinking alcohol, have used any drugs or medications, are an especially sound sleeper, or if you are suffering from sleep deprivation and find it difficult to awaken.
- Do not sleep with your baby if you are a large person, as a parent's excess weight has been determined to pose a risk to baby in a co-sleeping situation. If Baby rolls towards you, if there is a dip in the mattress, or if you suspect other dangerous situations, play it safe and move Baby to a bedside crib.
- Remove all pillows and blankets during the early months. Use caution when adding these as your baby gets older. Keep in mind that body heat will add warmth during the night. Make sure your baby doesn't become overheated.
- Do not wear any night-clothes with strings or long ribbons. Don't wear jewelry to bed, and if your hair is long, put it up.

- Do not allow pets to sleep in bed with your baby.
- Never leave your baby alone in an adult bed unless it is perfectly safe. For example, a mattress on the floor in a childproof room, when you are listening in with a reliable baby monitor.
- Make sure that your infant is sleeping on his back - the safest position for sleep.
- Do your research to be sure that co-sleeping is safe for your baby.

When to make changes

Sleeping situations go through a transformation process throughout the years. Some families make a decision to co-sleep with their children until they are ready for independent sleeping. Some families make changes when their babies sleep better at night, or to accommodate a need for private sleep. The best advice: go with the flow—and make adjustments according to what works best for your family.

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Solving Naptime Problems

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Sleep Solution*

Naps are important for your child's health and growth. A nap refreshes a child so that she can maintain her energy for the rest of the day. Studies show that children who nap are more adaptable, have longer attention spans, and are less fussy than those who don't nap. Does your child need a nap?



Average hours of day and night sleep

Age	Number of naps	Naptime hours	Night sleep hours*	Total night and nap sleep
Newborn	Newborns sleep 16 - 18 hours daily, spread over 6 - 7 sleep periods.			
3 months	3	5 - 6	10 - 11	15
6 months	2	3 - 4	10 - 11	14 - 15
9 months	2	2.5 - 4	11 - 12	14
12 months	1 - 2	2 - 3	11.5 - 12	13.5 - 14
18 months	1 - 2	2 - 3	11.25 - 12	13 - 14
2 years	1	1 - 2.5	11 - 12	13 - 13.5
3-4 years	0 - 1	0 - 1.5	11 - 11.5	11 - 13
5-7 years	0 - 1	0 - 1	11	11 - 12

*These averages don't signify unbroken stretches of sleep since night waking is normal.
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Timing and length of naps

Timing of naps is important. A late nap will prevent your child from being tired at bedtime. Generally, the best nap times are:

- *Two naps*: midmorning (9:00 - 11:00) and early afternoon (12:00 - 2:30)
- *One nap*: early afternoon (12:00 - 2:30); after lunch

If your child tends towards short naps, don't assume it's all she needs. Try these tips for better naps:

- Provide a healthy lunch or snack before nap.
- Keep the room dark.
- Play lullabies or white noise during the nap.
- Dress her in comfortable clothes.

- Be sure that discomfort (teething, allergies, etc.) isn't preventing sleep.

Watch for signs of tiredness

Tired children fall asleep easily. If you miss the signals they become *overtired* and are unable to sleep. Your child may show one or more of these signs that tell you he is tired and ready to nap:

- losing interest in playtime
- becoming whiny or fussy
- losing patience
- having tantrums
- rubbing eyes or yawning
- caressing a lovey or blanket
- asking for a pacifier, bottle or to nurse
- looking glazed or unfocused
- becoming hyperactive

The nap routine

Once you've created a schedule that works with your child's periods of tiredness, follow a simple but specific nap routine. Your child will be comfortable with a pattern to his day. He may predict when naptime approaches and willingly cooperate with you.

Nap routines change

Children's sleep needs change over time. The routine that you set up today won't be the same one you're using a year from now. Be adaptable!



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Nightmares, Night Terrors and Fears

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Sleep Solution*

The lack of adequate, restful sleep can affect your child's mood, behavior, health, memory and growth. *If there is anything standing in the way of a good night's sleep it's important to address the issue and solve the problem. Following is a list of typical sleep disrupters and possible solutions.*



Nightmares

Children spend more time dreaming than adults do, so they have more dreams-both good and bad.

After a nightmare saying "It was just a dream" doesn't explain what they experienced - after all, most kids believe that the tooth fairy and Big Bird are real, too. After a nightmare, offer comfort just as you would for a tangible fear. If your child wakes with a nightmare:

- Stay with your child until she feels relaxed and ready to sleep.
- Be calm and convey that what's happening is normal and that all is well.
- Reassure your child that he's safe and that it's OK to go back to sleep.

Night Terrors

During a night terror your child will wake suddenly and may scream or cry. Her eyes will be open, but she won't be seeing. She may hyperventilate, thrash around or talk incoherently. She may be sweating and flushed. She may seem scared, but your child is not really frightened, not awake, and not dreaming. She's asleep, and in a zone between sleep cycles. A child having a night terror is unaware of what's happening, and won't remember the episode in the morning.

During a night terror you may try to hold your child, but often this will result in his pushing you away or fighting you off. The best response is a gentle pat, along with comforting words or *Shhh Shhh* sounds. If your child gets out of bed, lead him back. If he's sitting up, guide him to lie back down. Keep an eye on him until he settles back to sleep.

Nighttime Fears

It's normal for a child to imagine monsters that generate a fear of the dark. Even if you explain, and even if you assure him that he's safe, he may still be scared. You can reduce his fears when you:

- Teach your child the difference between real and fantasy through discussion and book-reading.
- Find ways to help your child confront and overcome his fears. If dark shadows create suspicious shapes, provide a flashlight to keep at his bedside.
- Leave soothing lullabies playing, or white noise sounds running to fill the quiet.
- Give your child one, two, or a zoo of stuffed animals to sleep with.
- Put a small pet, like a turtle or fish, in your child's room for company.

- Take a stargazing walk, build a campfire, or have a candlelight dinner to make the dark more friendly.

Preventing Sleep Disrupters

Some things have been found to reduce the number or severity of sleep-disturbing episodes. They are all based on good sleep practices and worth a try:

- Follow a calm, peaceful routine the hour before bedtime.
- Maintain the same bed time seven days a week.
- Avoid books and movies that frighten your child.
- Have your child take a daily nap.
- Provide your child with a light snack an hour before bedtime, avoiding spicy food, sugar or caffeine.
- Have your child use the potty just before she gets in to bed.

Is there a time to call a professional?

Always call a professional if you have concerns about your child's sleep.



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Eight Sleep Tips for Every Child

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Sleep Solution*

The following ideas are of value to almost any sleeper, of any age.

These tips can bring improvement not only in your child's sleep, but also in her daytime mood and last, but not least - improvements in your own sleep and outlook as well.

1 Maintain a consistent bedtime and awaking time.

Your child's biological clock has a strong influence on her wakefulness and sleepiness. When you establish a set time for bedtime and wake up time you "set" your child's clock so that it functions smoothly.

Aim for an early bedtime. Young children respond best with a bedtime between 6:30 and 7:30 P.M. Most children will sleep *better* and *longer* when they go to bed early.

2 Encourage regular daily naps.

Daily naps are important. An energetic child can find it difficult to go through the day without a rest break. A nap-less child will often wake up cheerful and become progressively fussier or hyper-alert as the day goes on. Also, the length and quality of naps affects night sleep - good naps equal better night sleep.

3 Set your child's biological clock.

Take advantage of your child's biology so that he's actually *tired* when bedtime arrives. Darkness causes an increase in the release of the body's sleep hormone -- the biological "stop" button. You can align your child's sleepiness with bedtime by dimming the lights during the hour before bedtime. Exposing your child to morning light is pushing the "go" button in her brain - one that says,



"Time to wake up and be active." So keep your mornings bright!

4 Develop a consistent bedtime routine.

Routines create security. A consistent, peaceful bedtime routine allows your child to transition from the motion of the day to the tranquil state of sleep.

An organized routine helps you coordinate the specifics: bath, pajamas, tooth-brushing. It helps you to function on auto-pilot at the time when you are most tired and least creative.

5 Create a cozy sleep environment.

Where your child sleeps can be a key to quality sleep. Make certain the mattress is comfortable, the blankets are warm, the room temperature is right, pajamas are comfy, and the bedroom is welcoming.

6 Provide the right nutrition.

Foods can affect energy level and sleepiness. Carbohydrates can have a calming effect on the body, while foods high in protein or sugar generate alertness, particularly when eaten alone. A few ideas for pre-bed snacks are: whole wheat toast and cheese, bagel and peanut butter, oatmeal with bananas, or yogurt and low-sugar granola.

Vitamin deficiencies due to unhealthy food choices can affect

a child's sleep. Provide your child with a daily assortment of healthy foods.

7 Help your child to be healthy and fit.

Many children don't get enough daily physical activity. Too much TV watching and a lack of activity prevents good sleep. Children who get ample daily exercise fall asleep more quickly, sleep better, stay asleep longer, and wake up feeling refreshed.

Avoid activity in the hour before bedtime though, since exercise is stimulating - they'll be jumping on the bed instead of sleeping in it!

8 Teach your child how to relax.

Many children get in bed but aren't sure what to do when they get there! It can help to follow a soothing pre-bed routine that creates sleepiness. A good pre-bed ritual is story time. A child who is listening to a parent read a book or tell a tale will tend to lie still and listen. This quiet stillness allows him to become sleepy.

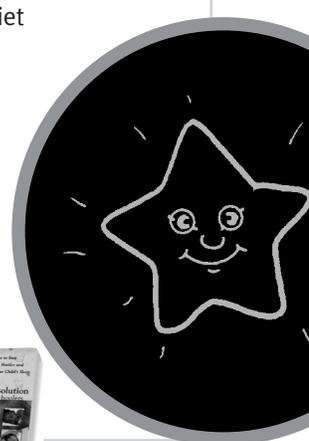
Work with these eight ideas and you'll see improvements in your child's sleep, and yours too.



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Moving from Crib to Bed

By Elizabeth Pantley, author of *The No-Cry Sleep Solution*

When your child moves from crib to bed it's a milestone in his life as well as yours. *There is no precise time for making this move, though typically it's between the first and third birthday. The key to success is to be patient and allow your child time to adjust to the change.*



Why move a child from crib to bed?

If a child sleeps well in his crib, don't rush the change. Switching to a bed gives a child freedom and brings new issues for parents, such as the yo-yo syndrome or early morning wanderings. The most common reasons to switch:

- *Your child learns how to climb.* Move your child out of the crib when the rail is up to the level of his nipples, since climbing out is more possible.
- *Your child outgrows the crib.* Don't assume it's time! You may think that he's uncomfortable, but he may be content in his little nest.
- *Your child asks for a bed.* If she's old enough, then go ahead and take the leap.
- *Your child is learning how to use the toilet.* Even if your child uses the toilet during the day, it's often a long while before bedtime dryness happens.
- *A new sibling is on the way.* If your little one loves his crib, then ousting him to make room for the newcomer may add stress. If you feel that the time is right then make the change two months or more before your newborn arrives.

What kind of bed should my child move to?

There are a number of options for a child's first bed:

- *Toddler bed* These are small, low and child-sized. They have guard rails on all sides, and come in playful designs.
- *Regular bed* A common choice is a mattress, box springs and bed frame (with all sides protected from fall-outs). Consider a double or bigger size to accommodate the night-reading ritual.
- *Mattress on the floor* A popular choice is a mattress or futon on the floor. This provides your little one with a big-kid bed, but one that prevents any painful falls.

- *Bunk bed* Hold off on a bunk bed until your child is 6 years old, when it is considered safe.

How do we make the change?

Which approach is best for you will depend on your reasons for making the change, your child's personality, and the size of his room. Here are a few options:

- *Big-kid bed hoopla* Some children enjoy having an official Big Kid Day party. Set up the bed, decorate the room and add a few sleep-related gifts like books and stuffed animals.

- *One-step-at-a-time* Take the mattress out of the crib and place it on the floor in the same place as the crib was. This gives your child the same sleeping surface and view of the room as he's accustomed to. Place guard rails around the sides to create a crib-like enclosure. Keep the same bedding and crib toys. This is a mid-step between the crib and a real bed.
- *The gradual introduction* Set up the new bed in the same room with the crib. Allow your child to play on the bed and nap there. Do your bedtime reading in the new bed. This will help your child get used to the bed gradually.

Patience and encouragement

No matter which path you choose - be patient. Big steps toward growth often happen in spurts, and your child may be excited to welcome the change one day, but wary of it the next. Maintain your nightly bedtime routine and help your child develop a positive association with his new bed, since he'll be sleeping there for many years to come.



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