

Caring for Your Child
SLEEP PROBLEMS: INFANTS

About 20% to 30% of infants and young children have a hard time falling asleep and/or they wake up at night. In most cases, sleep problems are not part of a larger medical problem but rather are related to poor sleep habits. The way in which children learn to fall asleep can start a pattern for the next few years. While there is no magic cure for sleep problems, most will go away if parents are able to stick with a program over time.

NEWBORN TO THREE MONTHS:

- Babies should sleep on their backs.
- Babies at this age will rarely sleep through the night without waking.
- Babies need to be fed throughout the day and night.
- Feeding cereal will not make a baby sleep through the night.

THREE MONTHS TO SIX MONTHS:

Babies at this age may still wake at night, and some may still need a nighttime feeding. This is the perfect age to start developing good sleep habits, which will help your baby start sleeping through the night at an early age and prevent later sleep problems.

Establishing good sleep habits:

- Put your baby to bed at the same time every night.
- If possible, your baby should sleep in the same place each night.
- Keep the room quiet and dark.
- Develop a bedtime routine that is the same every night.
- Put your baby down to sleep while still awake.

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SEVEN MONTHS TO ONE YEAR:

Babies at this age can sleep for long stretches at night. Usually, they do not need a nighttime feeding. Babies do need a routine pattern of getting ready for bedtime each night.

Getting your baby to sleep:

- Try to put your baby to bed at the same time each night.
- If possible, your baby should sleep in the same place each night.
- Keep the room quiet and dark.
- Develop a bedtime routine that is the same every night.
- Put your baby down to sleep while still awake.
- Your child should not sleep with a bottle. This will harm developing teeth.

If your baby wakes up at night:

- Check to make sure your baby is not in pain or needs to be changed.
- To let your baby know that it is still time for sleep, keep the room quiet and dark. Avoid cuddling or playing with your child.
- If your baby is still taking a nighttime bottle, decrease the amount of milk you are giving over time (give 8 ounces one night, then 7 ounces the next night until you are not giving anything). If you are breastfeeding, decrease the amount of time you spend nursing (nurse for 10 minutes one night, then 9 minutes, until you are no longer nursing).

CALL YOUR DOCTOR OR NURSE PRACTITIONER IF:

- Your baby cries for an extended period of time
- Your baby has a fever or looks sick
- Your baby doesn't calm when fed or changed

If you have any questions of concerns, please call us at _____.

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