



Night, night, sleep tight

Your complete guide
to a good night's
sleep – for everyone!



Most parents are familiar with dragging themselves out of bed in the middle of night to deal with a crying baby, or being woken up at the crack of dawn by an energetic toddler – but it doesn't make it any easier! Over time, chronic sleep deprivation can really take its toll. But it doesn't have to be that way. 'All babies can sleep in one long stretch, from four hours as a newborn to eight hours

at three months old,' says *Prima Baby's* sleep expert Jo Tantum. And the holy grail of sleeping for 12 hours through the night can be achieved by four months.'

The key is to establish healthy sleep patterns in the early days, Jo says. 'Babies dip in and out of sleep faster than we do, but by teaching your baby

to settle on her own and not getting into bad habits, like picking her up, you can help ensure peaceful nights through the toddler years and beyond.'

Our experts Three leading sleep experts share their wisdom



JO TANTUM Sleep specialist and author of bestselling *Baby Secrets: How To Know Your Baby's Needs* (£9.99,

Michael Joseph).



TIZZIE HALL Sleep guru and author of *Save Our Sleep: Helping Your Baby To Sleep Through The Night, From Birth to*

Two Years (£9.99, Vermilion).



ANDREA GRACE Health visitor, sleep expert and author of *Gentle Sleep Solutions: Teach Yourself*

(£8.99, Hodder).



< continued from previous page

0-3 months

In the early days, life with a newborn might feel a little chaotic, which is perfectly normal. After all, you're just getting to know your baby, so it's best to just go with the flow.

Your baby will be tired around an hour after waking up, enough time to change his nappy, feed him, and have time together before he goes back to sleep. 'As your baby gets older, he'll stay awake for longer and you'll be able to start getting into a routine,' says PB's sleep expert Jo. 'All babies have the potential to sleep for 12 hours through the night by the time they're about four months,' she says, 'but it also depends on your baby's weight. If he weighs 15/16lb (6.8kg-7.25kg), he's capable of sleeping between 7pm-7am.'

PEACEFUL NIGHTS START HERE...

✔ **Differentiate night from day** Help your baby understand that day is for play, cuddles, talking and light, and night is for calm, quiet voices and darkness. 'During wake time talk to him, always wake him up for feeds and change his nappy before a feed, so that he is wide awake,' advises Jo. 'At night, give him a bath or top and tail him. Then give him a relaxing massage, with calming music and dim lights. Put his pyjamas on and feed him.' Remember that 7pm to 7am is night-time, so no rowdy games if you can help it!

✔ **Make sure he's well fed and cosy** A well-fed baby sleeps longer, so make sure he's had enough milk in the day and give him a full feed before bed. Wrap him up – newborns like being swaddled, as it recreates

the snugness of the womb, but avoid doing this if the room is too hot. A baby sleeping bag is also a good idea, as babies can't kick covers off during the night. Some babies feel cosier in a small space, so you may want to use a Moses basket or carrycot, which has the benefit of being portable.

✔ Follow FSID's safe sleep guidelines (fsid.org.uk)

Your baby should sleep with his feet at the bottom of his cot so he can't wiggle down under the covers, and always on his back to reduce the risk of cot death. Make sure the room is between 16-20°C. If you're using a sleeping bag, make sure it's the right size and tog rating for the weather – 0.5 to 1.0 for warmer temperatures and 2.5 for the colder months. If you're worried that your baby's too hot, check his stomach, chest or the back

Did you know?
Parents will typically lose between 400-750 hours of sleep during a baby's first year.
Source: ABC.net.au

COMMON PROBLEMS

❖ **Being overtired** In a child under three months, this can manifest itself in long periods of crying, especially between 6pm and midnight – often mistaken for colic, says sleep guru Tizzie Hall.

'My two-month-old son sleeps until 1.30am, then wakes every two hours until 8am.' Celine Hazlewood, mum to Alexandre, two months.

One way of helping your baby sleep through the night is to give him a "dream feed" so he won't wake because of hunger,' says Jo. 'It may seem strange to wake a sleeping baby for a feed, but you're basically resetting his body clock, so he goes into a deep sleep until morning. Once breastfeeding is established, it's a good idea to use a bottle for this feed, because he may be so sleepy you'll find it difficult to get him to latch on and stay awake. Keep the lights low, change his nappy before feeding him, and don't worry about winding him halfway through as he'll be relaxed and won't take in much air.'

'Some babies may refuse feeds or fall asleep during a feed. They may also fight sleep by suddenly beginning to scream mid-feed, which is often mistaken for reflux. If you think your baby is overtired and not settling, sit upright in an armchair with him on your chest and patting him to the rhythm of your heartbeat,' she adds.



Baby
pregnancy
Handbook

4-12 months

Once your baby reaches four months, you're hopefully over the worst, with the promise of a good night's sleep getting closer. 'Things start changing rapidly at this stage, with most babies sleeping around 10-12 hours during the night and two to four hours in the day,' says

Jo. 'Although by three to four months, babies are capable of sleeping through the night, many of them may need a small feed between 5-7am.' Hopefully, you'll also be getting into a routine by now, with regular nap times in the day. 'By six to nine months your baby should be having two naps a day, an hour or less in the morning, and up to two hours in the afternoon,' advises Jo. She's also capable of sleeping 12 hours through the night – and by 12 months, your baby will start to drop her morning nap.

YOUR SLEEP ACTION PLAN

✔ **Teach your baby to self-settle** If your baby can put herself to sleep from fully awake, she'll be able to drift from one sleep cycle to the next easily at night, says Tizzie. Remember, if your baby uses an aid such as rocking, feeding or a dummy to settle, she will need this same aid to resettle when she wakes at night, warns Tizzie. 'Practise helping her self-settle during daytime sleeps by putting her down awake. Make the whole process fuss-free, and always finish a feed at least 10 minutes before bed,' she advises.

✔ **Start good sleep habits** Using simple sleep triggers at bedtime will help your baby or toddler unwind and relax, says health visitor

Andrea. 'The repetitive nature of a bedtime routine involving a calming bath, breast- or bottlefeed, then a story (a much better sleep trigger than milk) will also help your baby to feel safe and secure. This is important when your little one is about to separate from you for the night.'

COMMON PROBLEMS

❖ **Catnapping** A catnap is when a baby sleeps for only one sleep cycle, usually 40 minutes and can't go for longer. Catnapping can be caused by hunger, coldness or too little awake time. 'To solve catnapping, I would suggest you follow an appropriate sleep routine for your baby's age,' says Tizzie. 'If you find it difficult keeping your baby awake, try giving her a bath, go for a walk around the garden or give her some nappy-free playtime to keep her stimulated,' she adds.

Signs of tiredness
If your little one rubs her eyes, pulls on her ears or has faint dark circles under her eyes, it's time for sleep. Putting her to bed when you notice these signs will give her the best chance of nodding off and prevent her becoming alert and active again.

'My eight-month-old daughter Alice wakes often in the night and needs me to go and resettle her. I usually give her a dummy or pat her until she goes back to sleep. Help!'

Liz Rowlinson, mum to Alice, eight months.

Your baby needs to learn to settle herself to sleep without any sleep props, so try not to use a dummy,' says Jo. 'You can start helping her learn to fall asleep by herself by my method of "spaced soothing". This means that you listen for five minutes and then go in and soothe her for two to three minutes, and continue this pattern. If at any point you need to go in sooner, then do so. This helps your baby become more confident about falling asleep, as you are reassuring and comforting her, but she is putting herself to sleep.'



< continued from previous page

Sleeping aids

EWAN THE DREAM SHEEP,

£29.99, has a calming warm glow and four soothing sounds. Squeeze his foot to hear womb sounds, rain, harp music or a vacuum cleaner.



SLUMBER BEAR,

£34.99, comes with its own silkie blanket and plays four lullabies, plus white noise, ocean waves and womb sounds. It also has a record function.



LULLABY PLAYER,

£21.99, will soothe your baby with comforting natural sounds or a medley of lullabies. Can be voice-activated to start automatically when your baby cries, and has a reassuring night light.



❖ All available from mothercare.com.

1-3 years

You only need to look at the amount of energy a toddler burns off during the day to see why they need a good night's sleep.

Toddlers still need a daytime nap, although this will depend on their age, says Jo. 'A one-year-old will need up to two and a half hours during the

day, decreasing to two hours when he's two, with 11-12 hours at night. Then, when he's two-and-a-half to three, he will only be having around a one-and-a-half-hour nap, with 10-12 hours at night.' Some two year olds start dropping naps on some days and, by the time your toddler

reaches three, he may not need a nap at all.

YOUR SLEEP ACTION PLAN

✓ **Feed him well** It sounds obvious but make sure your toddler is well-fed and well-hydrated during the day, so

he won't wake up hungry or thirsty in the night. 'Make sure his diet is correct for his age – children have changing nutritional needs, and parents often move toddlers off baby food too soon,' says sleep guru Tizzie. One year olds shouldn't need a night feed for nutritional



purposes. In fact, feeding in the night can interfere with a baby's daytime appetite, adds health visitor Andrea. 'Some mums find that if they give their baby fruit after lunch, it causes discomfort and a dirty nappy around 6am.'

✓ Watch your nap times

Leave around two hours after your baby has woken up from the last daytime nap before starting his bedtime routine, says Andrea. 'With an older baby, this period is usually around three to four hours. Try to avoid allowing your baby to become overtired, however, as this will make it difficult for him to settle.'

✓ Get some fresh air

Just like us, children sleep better after a busy day with lots of fresh air. So, whenever possible, try and get outside – feed the ducks or go to the playground. This will stimulate his senses and he'll sleep better than if he'd been indoors all day.

✓ Have a good bedtime routine

Toddlers like to let off steam before bedtime, and a splash around in a warm bath will work off a bit of energy and give you a chance to scrub him down without him even noticing. Chat about what has happened in his day as you get him ready for bed and read a story, keeping

Did you know?
By the age of two, your child will have spent more time asleep than awake! Overall, she'll spend 40% of her childhood asleep. We couldn't believe it, either!
Source: National Sleep Foundation

your voice low and soothing. He'll love the physical closeness, and his language skills will

benefit too, as he absorbs new words. Then, give him a kiss, say 'Night night' and leave the room. Allow him to settle – don't keep going back to check him unless it's obvious your child is distressed. And leave the landing light on or invest in a nightlight – toddlers who wake in the night find it easier to settle themselves if there's a comforting glow to reassure them.

COMMON PROBLEMS

❖ **Early rising** Make sure that your toddler is warm enough at night. 'Too little bedding can cause your toddler to wake at 5am feeling cold,' says Andrea. 'Treat early rising as night-time waking. Go in before he becomes upset, and let him know that it's still sleepy time. Either remain beside him or keep popping in and out – what you're aiming for is that your child simply stays in his cot for increasing periods, so that he'll eventually snuggle down and go back to sleep,' she says. 'Once an acceptable time has been reached, open the curtains – this will give him a visual

cue that it is now time for him to get up.'

❖ **Having nightmares** Nightmares are common at this age – 70% of children have them – and are nothing to worry about,' says Andrea. 'If your toddler wakes up, go to him and give him a brief cuddle and some calm reassurance. Try not to reinforce any fears by involving yourself in checking under the bed for monsters.'



'My toddler wakes in the early hours, often shouting out "My mummy!" and crying. Are these night terrors and what should I do?'

Mandy Croft, mum to Marley, two.

☞ Night terrors are less common than nightmares and tend to occur earlier in the night,' says Andrea. 'They can be scary, as a child may cry but won't respond to comfort. Unlike a nightmare, he won't remember it in the morning and, although his eyes may be open, he's not awake. Stay with him until he calms down and never wake him up. If they are happening every night, your child is extremely scared or repeatedly having the same dream, so talk to your GP.'



Want advice on sleep routines?

TALK TO CHIREAL SHALLOW ON 0906 194 9917*

If you're worried about any aspect of your baby or toddler's bedtime routine, you're not alone – Prima Baby's expert parenting advisors are on hand to help – any time, night or day.



Chireal is a leading psychologist and sleep expert with 17 years' experience helping parents overcome their children's sleep problems to help achieve peaceful nights.

*The Prima Baby/Babyexpert expert advice telephone service costs £1.50 per minute from BT landlines. Cost from other networks may be higher. Callers must be 18+. For full terms & conditions, see Babyexpert.com. SP: Greatvine Ltd., 020 7440 9060

Prima Baby promotion



Baby essentials

As a mum, nothing is more important than the health and nutritional wellbeing of your child.

Although a healthy diet can provide the right vitamins and minerals for your baby, dealing with fussy eaters can often make it hard to ensure he is getting what he needs. A liquid supplement, such as Vitabiotics WellKid Baby & Infant, can help safeguard his diet.

Vital vitamins

Best known for its prenatal vitamin supplement Pregnacare, Vitabiotics has created WellKid Baby & Infant. Suitable from three months to five years, the delicious vanilla and orange flavoured liquid contains 14 essential vitamins and minerals to help support healthy growth, the immune system and brain function. It also includes vitamins A, C and D, as recommended for babies over six months, plus flaxseed oil and malt extract, a natural source of energy.



• Vitabiotics Wellkid Infant & Baby, £5.95 for 150ml, is available from Holland & Barrett, Tesco and Boots, or visit wellkid.co.uk.