HOW TO MANAGE YOUR NEWBORN BABY'S SLEEP

Baby Sleep 101

You might be wondering, "Don't babies just sleep when they're tired?" Actually, no! Babies need plenty of support and "***sleep parenting***" to sleep well.

Circadian Rhythms: Babies under 3 months don't have an internal day/night clock and can't understand day/night difference. However, they do have a longer stretch of sleep lasting 10-11 hours (with feeds), which is their "nighttime". It could be happening at any time of the day. The first step is to identify where this stretch is falling. The rest of the time, they rely on naps to stay well-rested.

Overtiredness: Babies have "wake windows" (the stretch of time they can stay awake at a stretch), beyond which they get overtired and their body produces the stress hormone, *cortisol*, which causes crying, fussiness, sleep resistance and disturbed sleep. Wake windows in the first month are 5 to 30 minutes, about 45 minutes in the second month and 45-60 minutes in the third month. They also need to complete their daytime naps and night sleep *with our support* so that these are not interrupted and they are well rested. Babies need 18-20 hours total sleep in the first month, 18 hours in the second month, 17 hours in the third month and 16 hours in the fourth month.

Sound & Light: Babies are not disturbed in the first 3 months but do need dark and quiet rooms both day and night after month 3 to sleep well.

How to Support Your Newborn's Sleep

Holding and babywearing:
Newborn babies need physical contact to sleep well. They often wake or take very short naps if we put them down. This is an absolutely normal *biological survival instinct*, not a habit. Once you identify the "daytime", please hold in arms throughout these naps to ensure full rest. Babywearing can help.

Safe Bedsharing
This keeps them close and secure through the night. Please look up the Safe Sleep 7 rules.

Breastfeeding
Nursing to sleep, "breastsleeping" (sleeping on the breast), frequent feeds, cluster feeding are all normal. Please offer frequently; do not unlatch your baby. There is no need to wake baby to feed after they have regained birth weight. Babies who are exclusively directly breastfed do not need to be burped after every feed if that wakes them up.

Multiple Soothing Methods
Newborns need a menu of ways to soothe them - feeding, rocking, walking, taking them outdoors babywearing, playing music, etc. Evening fussiness is normal. When fussy, try various methods to calm and soothe them.

Hi ! I'm Himani Dalmia

Baby Sleep Expert
I'm a certified infant and a child sleep specialist & co-author of the book, Sleeping Like A Baby.

Personalized Counselling
I work closely with families like yours to explain and implement the art & science of gentle baby sleep.

Baby Led Approach
I help your baby and you sleep better with biologically normal practices. no crying, no sleep training.

Contact Us

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