

- If you are bottle feeding, paced and responsive feeding can stop your baby feeling overfull or uncomfortable, both of which could affect their sleep.
- Night feeds are important to nourish your baby. If breastfeeding, the hormone that makes milk (prolactin) is highest at night.
- If you have someone to support you, let them help with nappy changing in the night and with jobs during the day, such as cooking and cleaning.
- Keep your baby's basket or cot next to your bed to make night-time feeds easier.
- You may find lying down to feed easier if you are breastfeeding. If you are bottle feeding, take a flask of boiled water (above 70 degrees) to where you sleep to help reduce disturbance.
- Try to rest or sleep in the day when possible, using mindfulness techniques to help with relaxation - use NHS Choices or apps such as Headspace.

### Your baby's development

- Babies are born with millions of nerve pathways in their brain. The more these nerves are stimulated, the more they will grow and become permanent.
- Your baby will start to respond to voices and will quieten when you speak to them if they are crying.

- They will also begin to recognise how you are feeling. They will start to smile and to make cooing sounds; these are the beginnings of speech and communication.
- You may begin to notice your baby pausing to listen when you are talking to them; this is the two-way process of communication developing.

### Useful links

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/baby-friendly-resources/sleep-and-night-time-resources/caring-for-your-baby-at-night/>

<https://www.basisonline.org.uk/>

For impartial and confidential advice or information on the services provided by Bridgewater or to receive this leaflet in an alternative format call our Patient Services team on 0800 587 0562.

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## 0-19 Service

### Your baby's sleep at 0 to 3 months



**Quality first and foremost**

## Your sleeping baby

- Up to three months there is a huge difference in the amount of time your baby will sleep - it can range from just over 9 hours to 20 hours.
- Sleep cycles are short at about 45 minutes.
- It is not until around 8 to 12 weeks that your baby's circadian rhythm (sleep-wake-cycle) matures enough for them to begin to tell night from day.
- Babies have increased amounts of Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep so will wake more easily. It is thought that the sleep cycle and arousal from sleep helps to protect against Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- It is advised that you have your baby in the same room as you (day and night when sleeping) until at least six months of age.

Remember, your baby's sleep is not under your control and cannot be forced.

## Recognising your baby's sleep cues

These can vary from baby to baby but you will begin to recognise your own baby's cues over time. The cues will also change as they grow.

Your baby may yawn, rub their eyes, pull at their ears or become quieter.

You may notice them frowning, pulling their hair, being less engaged and responsive, having a glazed look or drooping eyes; they may want to suck/feed or arch backwards. However, becoming irritable and beginning to cry are late signs and can lead to your baby becoming over-tired.

## Feeding your baby

Your baby has a very small stomach so will need to feed day and night to meet their needs.

Your baby's brain is growing at a very fast rate so they will need to be fed responsively to provide them with lots of energy.

Although managing night feeds can be challenging, it is also a quiet time away from the busyness of the day.

## Things that can affect your baby's sleep

**Environment** - the first three months of your baby's life, moving from the security of the womb to the outside world, is a period of huge change. Keeping their environment mainly calm and quiet can help with this change.

**Being overstimulated** - this can lead to your baby being unable to fall asleep easily - they may appear unsettled, cry and take a lot longer to relax into sleep.

**Growth and development** - this is a time when you will be getting to know your baby and when they will be growing and developing at a very fast rate. You may notice your baby waking more for feeds, which may indicate a growth spurt; these usually last for just a few days.

**Minor ailments** - such as coughs and colds.

**Changes in routine** - such as going away on holiday or moving house.

## Ideas to support you and your baby

- Keep your home as calm as possible - limit visitors to reduce overstimulation.
- Use natural daylight in the day and dim lighting at night - red lights are thought to be helpful.
- Babies may find night-time too quiet - white noise apps or white noise videos on YouTube may help.
- Keep your baby close and have skin-to-skin contact.
- Massage your baby or have a warm bath with your baby.
- Use a sling to keep your hands free and your baby close so they can hear your heartbeat and be settled by your gentle movements.
- Feed your baby when you see or hear early feeding cues, such as sucking fingers, restlessness or murmuring sounds. This will help them remain relaxed and more likely to be able to go back to sleep easily after the feed.
- If you are breastfeeding, offer the breast for comfort (you cannot overfeed a breastfed baby) - this can also help your baby to fall asleep.