



Help My Newborn  
Won't Sleep



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BORN WON'T  
SLEEP**

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## HELP MY NEWBORN WON'T SLEEP

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This e-book is not designed to sleep train your baby, they are too young for formal sleep training. Newborns need a lot of nurturing and support to get to sleep. We can't ignore your baby's cues when they are tired or hungry, we are simply trying to work with these, and tweak things to make things easier on you both!

## *The Biological Sleep Regulators*

We can't force a baby to go to sleep, when we do try to force a baby to go to sleep we create a stressful situation for both parents and baby. We need to ensure that baby is ready to sleep, thus they are biologically ready to sleep, and that they are giving us cue's they are ready to sleep. When these things align, if there is not a major hurdle preventing sleep (such as hunger or pain), sleep should be relatively easy for a new-born.

Sleep in all humans is regulated by 2 mechanisms inside the body, the sleep/wake homeostat (drive to sleep, pressure to sleep, sleep debt or sleep wave) and the circadian rhythm, which is the internal biological clock.

The sleep/wake homeostat is built up like a wave, as it rises we feel sleep pressure, so does your baby. The rising inner pressure of sleepiness, the longer your baby stays awake the bigger that drive to sleep becomes, but this awake time will change rapidly from birth to 6 months, and this is where a bit of knowledge on average awake times can make life easier.

As you may have already experienced, if your baby stays awake well past that point of sleepiness it can be very difficult to get them to sleep. This is overtiredness and it causes their sympathetic nervous system to kick into high gear and sleep becomes tricky.

Biological clock controls when you and your baby sleep, and when they will be alert. This clock is controlled by hormones released in the body and is very powerful.

The drive to sleep, and the pressure to sleep is highest at night time, this is controlled by your baby's biological clock, and this might be why you find night sleep a lot easier than day naps for your baby. This clock needs environmental cues to regulate it, and re-set it every day. This is where sun light and lots of social activity between 7am-7pm can help your baby learn the difference between night and day really quickly.

Learning the difference between day and night will quickly occur if you allow these cues to do their job. If your baby hasn't yet learnt this difference, their biological clock is out of sync with real time and this will make sleep more difficult to come by.

Consider the situation where your baby is very wakeful at night or unsettled and thus their drive to sleep is highest in the day, when their circadian rhythm is telling the body to be most alert. This out of sync pattern results in a grumpy tired baby. How we can help, is by teaching you strategies to help your baby get back to sleep easily at night, so their little systems align, and they are happy and content.

# *Sleep Architecture and Sleep Cycles*

These can be predictable, or unpredictable and both are normal. Your baby might sleep for one sleep cycle (45 minutes) for his morning nap, and then easily have 2 sleep cycles later in the afternoon. Science tells us that this is normal, as sleep architecture can be variable from day to day. Wondering why your baby will only sleep for 45 minutes in the morning, but will happily sleep for 1.5 hours in the afternoon is going to cause you stress, instead look for those patterns and know that if your new-born wakes up happy after a sleep, whether its 45 minutes or 1.5 hours, he has probably

- a. Had enough sleep
- b. Is happy to have a quiet rest and put himself back to sleep shortly
- c. Or wasn't awake long enough to need any more sleep than 45 minutes

Your babies 45 minute power nap has reduced the sleep/wake homeostat enough that they don't feel such a powerful drive to sleep anymore, but this drive might build enough that they need a longer sleep later on in the day.

Watching your baby will let you know whether they need more sleep than they are getting, or are happy with the amount of sleep they have. If they wake up crying from a 45 minute sleep they are either.

- a. Hungry - try feeding them and seeing if they then want to be awake or finish their nap
- b. In pain from wind or reflux, try picking them up to burp them or cuddle them and then see if they are happy to be awake or try to go back to sleep. (Rubbing their face into your shoulder is often a sleep cue new parents miss here).
- c. Still tired and want to be asleep but have woken for some reason. Try adjusting their swaddle so they are snug, turn their white noise back on and try to re-settle with a rock, or a pat or a jiggle.



Over time this will become more regular and predictable.

The sympathetic nervous system is the part of the autonomic nervous system which responds to stress. It prepares the body to cope with stress by producing stress hormones like Noradrenaline, cortisol and adrenaline these increases your heart rate and breathing rate and prepares your body to fight or fly. If these situations of stress occur frequently for your baby, they might be finding it difficult to fall asleep, and understandably so!

Their parasympathetic nervous system is not yet developed, this is the part of the nervous system which allows the body to calm down the sympathetic nervous system, so when you become stressed, you can calm yourself down or self soothe. Your new-born can't physiologically do this yet. They are looking to you to be their calmer, and help them get to such a calm state that they can go to sleep.



With this knowledge we can see why babies who are in pain from reflux or colic are so much harder to settle than babies who are not, as their sympathetic nervous system is working in over drive and inhibiting the ability to sleep. The solution is to physically soothe them and help them calm down and then get off to sleep.

Similarly this is why we don't use cry it out on newborns, this would only serve to stress your baby and trigger this stress response by the sympathetic nervous system and inhibit their ability to sleep. Until the ability to self soothe is developed, we need to offer assistance to calm, and get off to sleep.

Things which we know help to calm this central nervous system when it's stressed, or turn on the calming reflex.....

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| a. Holding                             | f. Jiggling      |
| b. Sucking/feeding/<br>dummies/fingers | g. Skin on skin  |
| c. Patting                             | h. Massage       |
| d. Rocking                             | i. Swaddling     |
| e. Walking                             | j. Side settling |
|  | k. White noise   |

When your baby is hungry their sympathetic nervous system switches on, this overrides your baby's drive to sleep. So essentially hunger has woken them up. To calm this state of stress, you need to feed your baby. If this is mid nap or middle of the night, feeding your baby will be the fastest way to calm them down and figure out if they are hungry or ready to be awake. You don't need to try to force 3-4 hourly feeds on your new-born by holding them out. Our routine examples below, have feeds 2-3 hourly, with top ups and split feeds as examples of ways to ensure your baby is not hungry and is going to sleep with a full tummy. If your baby is crying before you feel a feed is "due" they are probably hungry and a quick feed will be the least stressful option. If you feel your baby is feeding 1-2 hourly around the clock for a prolonged period of time, speak with a lactation consultant to check if their latch is correct or if there is anything which needs to be addressed.

## *Under Stimulation VS Over Stimulation*

Your new-born is easily over stimulated by lots of western activities (rushing from school to kindy to mainly music or wriggle and rhyme, to swimming lessons, being held and passed around by 12 different people and home again) but they can also easily be under stimulated, and sometimes your babies crying or grumpiness can be switched off by a change in scenery or more sensory input. This is why we recommend a walk outside before each nap, just 10 minutes in a different environment with different sights, smells, movements as you walk, and pressure from your body can help to calm the sympathetic nervous system which is craving these sensory inputs.

If your baby has not had adequate sensory input for the day this can actually inhibit their ability to sleep. This desire for adequate sensory input can override their ability to sleep. White noise can be a great sensory input when your baby is struggling to sleep.

Too much sensory input can have the opposite effect, but you will know when you have tried to fit too much in, and your baby will respond to you pulling back on the sensory overload. Experiment with how much your baby needs.

New-borns need a lot of sleep, on average they need 10-12 hours over night (broken with feeds) and between 4-6 hours of sleep a day.

If your new-born is falling well short of this, chances are your baby is over tired. Sleep appears to be a very controversial topic, with everyone from well child or maternity nurse to your grandmother offering advice. Some of the most confusing things new mothers get told are

- Never wake a sleeping baby
- Swaddling is cruel
- Sleep them in the light during the day, it will teach them the difference between night and day.
- Feed your baby formula he/she will sleep better.
- Leave your new-born to cry, they will learn faster to sleep through the night.

# *The Truth Behind These Suggestions*

## *Never Wake a Sleeping Baby*

If you allow your newborn to sleep for 3-4 hours at once during the day, chances are they have slept past a scheduled feed time (approximately 3 hours from start of feed-start of feed). This means that you now have an extra feed to fit in during the current 24 hours. Chances are your baby is going demand this feed in the middle of the night.

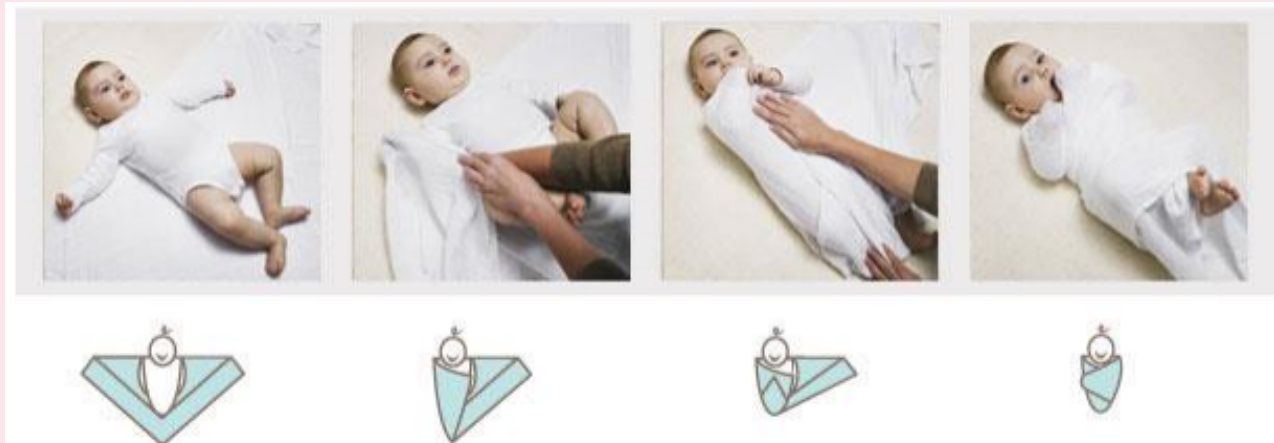
By waking your newborn for a feed approximately 3 hours after the start of their last feed, you are encouraging them to get in the calories they need during the day as opposed to at night. This is not to say your newborn won't wake at night, but a newborn can quickly sleep from a late 10pm feed to 6/7am with just one feed, as long as they are getting feeds 3 hourly during the day.

This is also good for your supply, especially during the first 6 weeks when your body is working so hard to establish a good supply.

This doesn't mean you need to hold your baby out to wait for a feed until 3 hours has passed, but try not to let your baby go much longer than 3 hours between feeds.



# *Swaddling is Cruel*



Your baby might appear to fight the swaddle, and even bust loose of the swaddle, your mother in law might tell you tales of how she never swaddled her babies and they slept just fine.

Swaddling is one of the best, cheapest and easiest ways to get your newborn to sleep. Babies are very tightly cocooned inside you when you are pregnant, and once they are born you cannot expect to pop them in a cot or bassinet and they will drift off to sleep unaided.

They may even do this for up to 3 weeks, sleep with no swaddle, you may have told people you have a dream baby who doesn't like swaddling. Then suddenly at around 3 weeks newborns "wake up". Suddenly not such a sleepy newborn, and they require help getting to sleep.

Swaddling is key here, their startle reflex is strong, they will startle awake when you lay them down or after 20 minutes as they attempt to get into a deep sleep, or after 45 minutes as they attempt to move into another sleep cycle.

If your baby is busting out of his/her swaddle it is not because he/she hates it, it is because it is too small or your swaddling technique needs improving. A miracle wrap or similar is a great investment as they are Houdini proof and husband proof very simple to use. Otherwise check out the sleep store online for a full range of swaddles to try.

If your baby appears to fight the swaddle when you lay him/her down, again this is not because she hates it. Your newborn baby doesn't "hate" anything. They are probably already over tired when you lay them down to swaddle them, so try bringing their nap time forward by 10 minutes.

You could also try swaddling, then offering a top up feed to calm your baby in their swaddle, or pop a dummy in if they take one before you swaddle them.

The swaddle becomes a great sleep association which doesn't require your help every 45 minutes, and is transferable from person to person. It is easily replaced by a sleeping bag between 4-7 months, and is your ultimate tool against cat napping.

If your baby is born in the summer and you are concerned they are hot, simply strip them down to a nappy and singlet and use a 100% cotton swaddle, and consider a fan in their room.

# *Sleep Them in the Light to Teach Them the Difference Between Night and Day*

Again this one may work for the first 3 weeks of baby's life, then suddenly they wake up and naps become more difficult.

Light actually hinders our ability to nap, most adults would confess they would shut the blinds during the day if they were to take an afternoon nap. The same applies to your baby; a dark room is much more conducive to a good nap than sun streaming in the windows

## WHAT WILL TEACH YOUR BABY THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NIGHT AND DAY IS 2 THINGS?

1. Waking your baby for feeds during the day, doing these feeds in the lounge or out and about, there is lots of natural sun light, noise and sensory stimuli. They are allowed to play and kick around after feeds during the day. It's fun!
2. Any nights waking are considered not fun. Mum is no fun at night, she doesn't smile and laugh at baby, night feeds are done in a dim room with a small light, think less stimuli. A feed is quick no fuss, quick change of nappy, quick top up feed, re swaddle and back to bed. No light, no fun, no noise.
3. These tactics will in 3 weeks teach your baby the difference between night and day.

# *Feed Your Baby Formula They Will Sleep Better - Myth*

Yes formula takes longer to digest, but just as many formula fed babies end up with bad sleep associations and sleep problems as breast fed babies.

Suddenly trying formula on a whim for more sleep in the first 8 weeks could also result in no sleep for you or baby if baby over feeds, or gets an upset tummy from the formula.

Research recently has shown that breast milk produced at night has sleep inducing properties, this can't be replicated in formula.

If you suspect baby is hungry and thus not napping well, first ensure you are swaddling, baby is not over tired, baby is well winded and sleeping in a dark room.

If you are still worried see a lactation consultant or a plunked nurse or an LLL leader about help with breast feeding. Things like an incorrect latch or low supply or a tongue tie could mean your baby is not getting a full feed and is still hungry.

This is not to say, do not chose to formula feed your baby, and how you feed your baby is a decision you make, but don't listen to advocates who try to say formula will make your baby sleep better.

At 12 weeks most baby's formula or breast fed can sleep for a long stretch from 10pm-5/6am, so hang in there for 12 weeks, and you too should be getting more sleep.

“People will say your milk is poor quality, but breast milk is a bi product of blood, and people don't refer to blood as poor quality.” Womanly art of breastfeeding



# *Leave Your Newborn to Cry They Will Settle Faster*

You don't need to leave a newborn to cry, a baby under 4-6 months old doesn't have the ability to self-soothe, they may learn to self-settle, and not require your assistance, but they can't soothe themselves when they are upset and their sympathetic nervous system is getting turned on. A baby over 4-6 months can develop the ability to self-soothe they will suck their fingers or thumb, or hold a cuddly, or rub their face on the sheets. Their parasympathetic nervous system can't kick in and help your baby calm down until they are through the new-born phase.

It is better to learn to settle your newborn without tears, and teach them good healthy sleeping habits, so even at 4-6 months you don't have to leave them to cry. You can simply slowly and gently work your way up the hierarchy of self-soothing shown below.

Small amounts of grizzling is different to full blown screaming and crying, and this is perfectly ok to ignore!

# *Hierarchy of Self-Soothing*



This is the hierarchy of self-soothing, and I would not expect any baby to be at the top consistently until at the very earliest 16 weeks. So keep in mind the end goal, but if you are the bottom right now - that is very normal!

## *How to Settle your Newborn*

There is a huge variety of ways to settle a new-born baby for a nap. No way is the right way and no way is the wrong way. Here at BSC we would rather you held and rocked your baby to sleep than they skipped a nap at this age, so please don't feel guilty if some days the only nap your little one has is in your arms! We really like the shush pat as a long term solution as it teaches baby to go to sleep in their cot or bassinet, and they go down drowsy or awake so they are aware this is their bed and this is where they have gone to sleep. All soothing is done in the bed eventually which makes it very easy to back it off between 8-16 weeks and allow your baby to pick up more and more gentle self-settling skills. But you might also find swaddling then feeding and popping down drowsy helps, or rocking your baby's hips or their bassinet.

Set up your babies sleep space, curtains shut, white noise on, swaddle, cuddle and soothe in your arms (with a feed, or dummy or pat or rock) until drowsy, then lay them down, and keep your hands on them. If they don't cry you don't need to help them anymore - if they choose to lie awake and look around for 20 minutes this is fine and very normal in the early weeks. If they begin to cry and fuss - step in and help them with this method below.

## **PARENTAL ASSISTANCE SHUSHING AND PATTING**

You are going to stay by the cot, using a shush pat to get him off to sleep. This can take 20 minutes but he should respond quickly to this and after a week or so it won't take 20 minutes each time you do it. This won't be 20 minutes of crying, if your baby is distressed or is crying for more than 5 minutes, pick them up and soothe them again as above until they are calm or drowsy. In a week or 2 you might be consistently working towards calm, not drowsy depending on how old your baby is and where on the hierarchy you are aiming for.

## HOW TO SHH AND PAT:

Swaddle the baby snugly and make sure the room is as dark as you can get it. Lay the baby on his side so you have access to the back. You can use a wedge or a rolled up towel to prop him up. Make sure you remove these once he is asleep.



Patting and shushing is done with a firm pat in the centre of the back (like a tick-tock rhythm) or on the bottom and a long, repeated shhhhhh past (not into) the ear. Loudly, like a faucet. Not fast. Or you can try the baby shusher app, or white noise machine.

Generally you do the patting/shushing in the cot. But if he cries, you can pick him up, patting and shushing him over your shoulder, until he's completely calm but not asleep.

Then lay him down and keep patting and shushing. (Put a hand on his chest, or if the room isn't very dark, shield his eyes from visual stimulation.)

Keep patting and shushing in the cot for 7 - 10 minutes after he's completely settled and zoning out.

If he cries, shush again while patting and pick up if necessary, or simply leave the white noise or shusher going while he sleeps.

Eventually you will get to the point where you are patting and shushing and he's zoning out and settled in the cot.

Then you slow down the patting and shushing, stop shushing and keep patting until baby goes to sleep

Slow your patting down at this stage.

Stay with him until he's in a **deep sleep** past the "jolt". This is the point where he moves from a light sleep to a deep sleep (roughly 20 minutes). You may or may not need to still be patting at this point, some babies will need the patting and some babies will need the hand on the chest or just your presence.

The key to patting is not to stop just because baby has calmed down, keep it up and stay with him in the early days. Don't leave, just stay one more minute if you think it is time to leave. The last thing you want to do is leave too soon and have him wake up the minute you leave and shut the door - then you are back at square one and starting over again!

Once you are ready to back off a little, you can just pat until he is calm, and then see if he will settle to sleep with your hands on him, or just your proximity to his bed.



If 40 - 45 minutes have passed without sleep, feed him and try again. He'll be hungry by then. Don't panic if he almost falls asleep on the breast at this point, take him off slowly, give him a gentle burp and pop him back to bed.

Once baby is settled and very drowsy or asleep, gently in 3 slow movements roll him to his back to complete his nap.

Remember you won't be staying for this long forever, after a few weeks it will take a couple of minutes of shush patting and he will know it's sleepy time.

## DOES THE SHUSH PAT BECOME A PROP LIKE A DUMMY?

The shush pat doesn't become a prop like a dummy or being fed to sleep or movement, as you slowly ease it off, he will require it less and less. It blocks out all the stimuli as babies under 6 months old can't keep track of more than two thoughts, you're shushing, you're patting and there is no room for thoughts of crying.

## CAN I USE THE SHUSH PAT IF MY BABY WAKES AGAIN?

It can be used if he wakes after 45 minutes (crying) to get him to do another sleep cycle, without picking him up, you start the shush pat and again, stay until he is in a deep sleep. Try to assess if he is hungry or tired or windy. If he wakes up happy, he is probably ready to be awake, or try leaving him for 10-20 minutes (happy in his cot) to see if he wants to go back to sleep.

Gradually you will learn how much assistance he needs to go to sleep, you will pick up that his breathing softens and you know you can leave the room or

perhaps he will become squirmy suddenly after being still and 2 minutes later he is fast asleep. Each baby has a little cue you can pick up on.

Try to limit how much you pick up and put down during settling a new born, as this is very over stimulating for a baby under 3 months old. Just as lots of visitors right before nap time, who all want one last cuddle, this is often too much for a new born baby and you will end up having a hard time settling them to sleep.

Using the shush pat to get your baby to sleep for more than one sleep cycle will teach him not to cat nap, it's very important for baby's mental and physical development that they nap well during the day and don't cat nap. It's also great for mothers as it gives us time to ourselves! Bear in mind this might take 16 weeks for your baby to master, it's important to work out if your baby is happy with short sleeps, or grumpy and its effecting their night sleep. If it is the later, then try extending their sleep length, if it's the first and they are happy, wait until they show you signs they are ready for more sleep or its effecting their night sleep negatively.

## *Reasons This Method May Not Be Working*

### **1. PARENTS TRY SHUSH PAT WHEN THEIR BABY IS TOO OLD.**

Shush pat is only suitable up until 6 months old. After this time it can annoy and frustrate babies. But if you have used it from birth it is a very strong cue that it is sleepy time, if you have to give Pamol at 2am for a 9 month old baby who is cutting a tooth, a quick shush pat and they should self-settle back to sleep.

### **2. PARENTS DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY THEY'RE DOING SHUSH PAT-AND THEREFORE DO IT WRONG.**

Shush pat is a technique to calm a crying baby enough that they can go to sleep. You are keeping them calm in their cot, so they can fall asleep alone. If you don't pat firm enough, or with a good rhythm, or try no shushing or white noise - it also might not work. Trying to tap a shoulder or tummy are other common mistakes.

### **3. PARENTS DON'T REALIZE THAT THEY NEED TO LOOK AT AND ADJUST THEIR BABY'S ENTIRE DAY.**

You need to look at what your child is eating and his/her activities for the day. All babies are at risk for overstimulation with all the gadgets and toys we as parents use. The calmer you can keep baby the better they will sleep. Even the shush pat will be hard on an over stimulated over tired baby.

### **4. PARENTS' OWN EMOTIONS GET IN THE WAY, ESPECIALLY GUILT**

Shush pat won't work if you are feeling sorry for your child. Babies will pick up on the emotion and emulate it. For shush pat to work, parents must exude an air of confidence.

Parents who feel guilty are more likely to give in because they feel they are hurting their child or depriving them of love. They usually pick the baby up over and over and end result is over stimulated, or they will offer top up feed after top up feed, which results in high intake of foremilk and a gassy tummy.

## **5. THE ROOM ISN'T READY FOR SLEEP.**

You have to minimize distractions when you do shush pat. Lights dim, and room quiet.

## **6. ONE PARENT ISN'T READY.**

Both parents need to be on board.

## **7. THE PARENTS DON'T COORDINATE THEIR EFFORTS**

Each parent should take two nights in a row so that baby is only dealing with one parent at a time. Having both parents in the room is distracting and if you switch in the middle it is like starting over.

## **8. PARENTS HAVE UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS**

Shush pat is not magic. It does not cure colic or reflux or ease the pain of teething or make a difficult baby easier to handle.

Settling a baby is hard work, but if you put in the effort now - you will have a very easy baby by 12 weeks. Baby will be frustrated when you start, expect a lot of crying, but because you are with baby they will not feel abandoned.

## **9. PARENTS GET DISCOURAGED AND THEN DON'T STICK WITH IT.**

They cave as early as the first night or they try for a night and then stop.

They give up after they have had just a little progress -they have initial success but when the problem recurs they don't go back to shush pat.



# *Other Ways to Settle Your Newborn*

## ROCKING

- Rocking a baby swaddled in your arms is another sure way to get baby off to sleep, or in an electric swing, or in a buggy, or a swinging bassinet, or a hammock. This very effective method unfortunately loses its effectiveness somewhere between 6-12 weeks, so I strongly advice that you save it after 6 weeks as your back up plan, rather than your go to plan, or your once a day plan. You want to start phasing this out before it becomes a sleep prop and you are rocking your 8kg baby in your arms every 2 hours over night at 5 months.

## SUCKING

- Feeding to sleep works brilliantly on a baby under 3 weeks old, they take sometimes the full hour to feed, change their nappy and feed again, then it is bed time, they are fast asleep, Perfect!

- Do not panic, they are too small for you to be creating bad habits. After 3 weeks their awake time moves to more like 1.5 hours (somewhere around the 4-5 weeks) and their feed is usually over with 45 minutes, so you are no longer feeding to sleep and need new skills like your shush pat, or your back up plan of rocking. You can continue to offer a top up feed at the end of any awake period if you want to use the feed to get your baby ready to sleep
- Dummies, here is your back up back up plan, I love dummies and highly recommend them for new babies, babies love to suck to be soothed, and a dummy means dad can hold baby and soothe him, while mum has a shower or a nap, rather than baby soothe using mums breast constantly. In the early weeks be careful that you have breast feeding established before you get a dummy out, or limit dummy use until you have breast feeding sorted so you don't confuse your baby with the different sucking styles.

- Also a small newborn baby which wakes after 2 hours or 2.5 hours is probably hungry, and sticking a dummy in is not productive, they might be quiet sucking on it, but probably won't go back to sleep, and are not feeding, so when you do go to feed them, you have an over tired baby on your hands. Aim to be phasing the dummies out by 3 months unless you are committed to them long term.

## WHITE NOISE

- This can be as simple as the static on a radio, or as flash as a CD or baby shusher app or white noise machine on repeat in baby's room. There are also free apps on iphones and smart phones, which when plugged into some speakers are quite effective. White noise blocks out other noises and gives babies something to focus on when trying to settle. It calms their sympathetic nervous system and allows them to respond to your settling attempts. Music playing for an entire nap, generally isn't as effective, a toy or mobile which plays lullaby's which you incorporate as a sleep ritual is fine as it doesn't play all nap.

## AN AWFUL EXHAUSTING DAY

If you have had a rough day with your baby at any age, they have been fighting naps, or tricky to feed, you're emotional and over whelmed and dreading the night, as you know a bad day often leads to a bad night, a great remedy is a nice warm deep bath for the two of you. The skin on skin will get the oxytocin flowing which will calm you and baby down. A gentle massage afterwards for baby, and then into a dimly lit room for a final feed, this should help undo a difficult day for both of you.

These days will pass, but if you feel you are having more of these days not less, then have a chat to your GP or Plunket nurse, or maternal nurse about how you are feeling.

## NAP SCHEDULES

Nap schedules are great for teaching your baby when it's time to sleep and when it's time to be awake. We are working with your baby's naturally developing circadian rhythm to ensure that their sleep/wake homeostat stays in tune with real time.

Usually babies on fairly set nap schedules (age appropriate) cat nap less and sleep well at night. This is due to the consistency around what your baby learns to expect, each day is so similar they quickly understand when you are going to insist they link their sleep cycles and when 45 minutes is ok. They are feed frequently and never are left to cry from hunger or tiredness. Parents generally feel confident knowing how their day will pan out and how they can schedule things to work around their babies very important naps.

But it is also 100% fine to have a less structured day, but a consistent start and finish to your day, while offering optimal nap conditions at regular periods throughout the day. Only you will know what is going to work for your family and your baby's temperament.

## 0-3 WEEKS

Feed 3 hourly from when baby wakes at some point close to “morning” this might be 6am, 7am or 8am, from here you have 12 hours to feed 3 hourly and get baby down for the night. Remember we aren’t making baby wait for a feed, but we are trying to avoid letting them spread their feeds further than 3 hourly to encourage good night sleep. This will allow your babies biological clock to quickly develop and become in sync with their sleep/wake homeostatic drive.

Baby can stay awake for 45 minutes-1 hour 15 by 3 weeks, then nap for up to 2 hours.

After you get baby to bed at night (6 pm 7pm or 8pm), Wake baby 3-4 hours later if baby doesn’t wake herself and do 1 last feed before you go to bed yourself.

## 0-3 WEEKS

Then feed on demand overnight.

A baby born over 4kg, should manage to go 4 hourly overnight, BUT it would be normal for 3 weeks for babies to wake 3 hourly for a feed.

You are better off feeding and settling back to sleep than trying to use a dummy to stretch out sleeps or get your husband to rock baby, this leads to an over tired grumpy hungry baby.

## 3-6 WEEKS

Baby needs slightly less day time sleep, and if you have breast or bottle feeding sorted you could start to shape a nap schedule.

Ensure you begin settling baby to sleep before scheduled nap time so they are asleep after a maximum of 1.5 hours awake.

Either start your day when baby wakes, or set your alarm for 7am.

7am feed

8am -optional top up feed

8.20/30am Nap

10am awake and feed

11am offer a top up feed to help with a big long nap here

11.20/30am -Big nap



If your baby is only doing 45 minute sleeps, you might find that a sleep at 11.30 and then again at 1pm works better and enables you to get through the afternoon.

1.30/2pm - feed

3pm optional top up feed

3.30/3.45pm Nap

5pm - wake baby for ½ a feed

5.30pm Bath

5.45/6pm evening routine and second half of feed

6.15/6.30pm bed for the night - or your baby might still be cluster feeding at this age, and not settle for the night until after 9/10pm

Feed on demand if baby wakes before 10pm or wake baby at 10/10.30pm for a feed.

Feed on demand until 7am.

## 6-9 WEEKS

Melatonin production begins around 8-12 weeks old, this can be when a dream sleeper suddenly starts waking after 45 minutes, and this is one complete sleep cycle. Spend a few days not teaching baby using your shh pat to go back to sleep and you won't have tears and sleepless nights in 5 months. If you are happy with the 45 minute sleeps and your baby is not grumpy, feel free to roll with it and try 4 naps not 3.

7am feed

8.15am - optional top up feed

8.30/8.45 am Nap

10am awake and feed

11.15 am offer a top up feed to help with a big long nap here

11.30 /11.45 am -Big nap

If your baby is only doing 45 minute sleeps, you might find that a sleep at 11.30/11.45am and then again at 1/1.30pm works better and enables you to get through the afternoon. You might need to also feed inbetween these short naps. Follow your baby's cues around feeding.

2pm - feed

3.30pm optional top up feed

3.45/4 pm Nap

5pm - wake baby for  $\frac{1}{2}$  a feed

5.30pm Bath

5.45/6pm evening routine and second half of feed

6.15/6.30pm bed for the night

Feed on demand if baby wakes before 10pm or wake baby at 10/10.30pm for a feed.

Feed on demand until 7am.

## 9-12 WEEKS

Big Melatonin surge at 12 weeks, baby suddenly seems wide awake and rocking and driving are not as easy for getting baby back to sleep.

7am feed

8.30am optional top up feed

8.40/9 am Nap

10.00am awake

10.30am feed

11.30 am offer a top up feed to help with a big long nap here

11.400 11.45 am -Big nap

If your baby is only doing 45 minute sleeps, you might find that a sleep at 11.45/12 and then again at 2pm works better and enables you to get through the afternoon. You might need to offer another feed in-between these small sleeps too.

2.15/2.30pm - awake and feed

4 pm Nap

5pm - wake baby for ½ a feed

5.30pm Bath

6pm evening routine and second half of feed

6.15/6.30pm bed for the night

10.30pm wake baby for half a feed, keep baby awake with a nappy change a little kick around for 20 minutes, then second half of feed and back to bed

Feed on demand until 7am.

# Sleep Cycles



Between 3-12 weeks your babies' circadian rhythm starts to develop and they begin to develop sleep cycles over the day. Previously they may have easily slept 3-4 hours at a time, now suddenly they are waking every 35-45 minutes, or perhaps not even sleeping more than 20 minutes, this is their sleep cycles developing and they need your help to progress from one cycle to another.

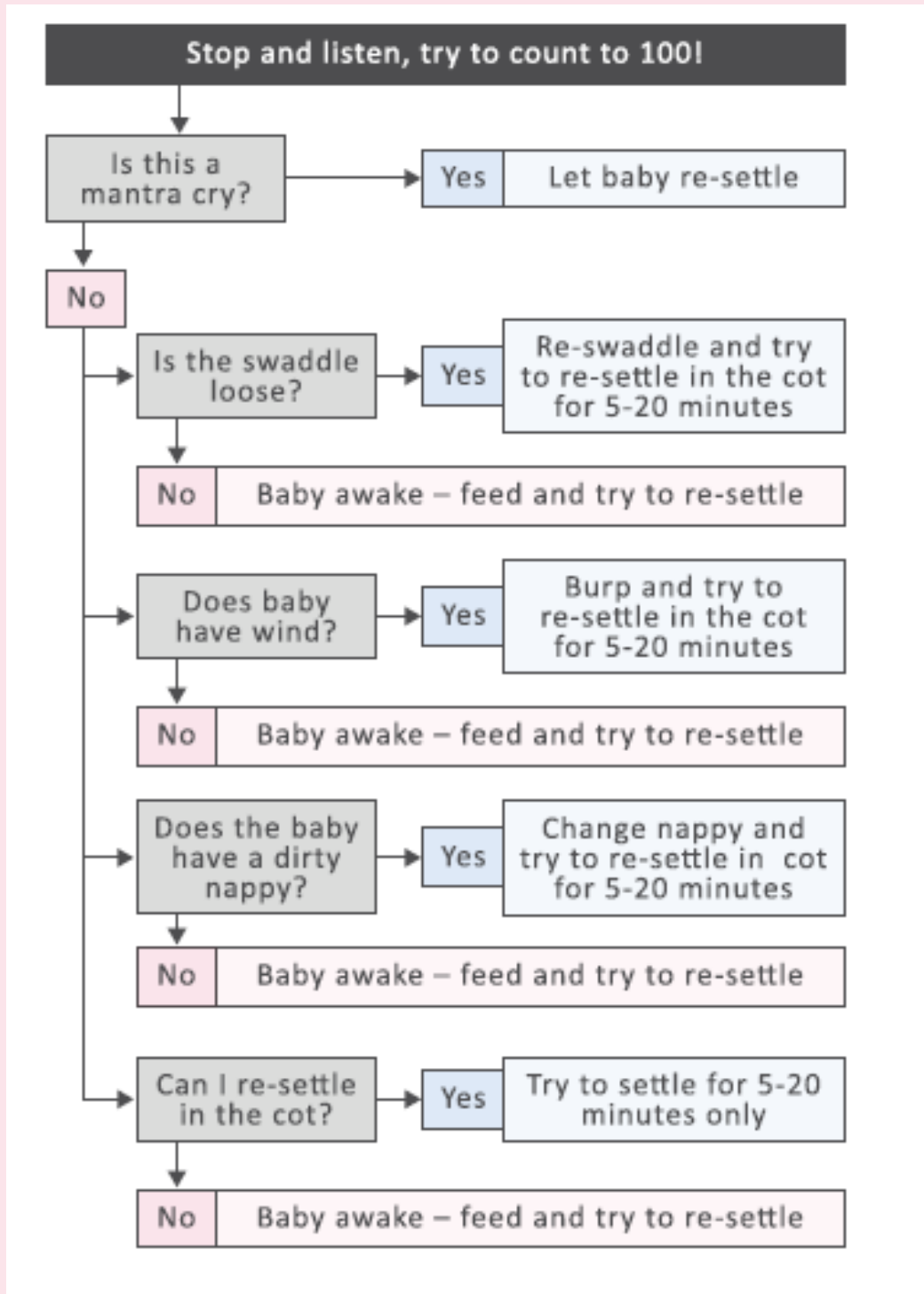
Routine helps, dark sleeping spaces help, and a good swaddle helps. White noise is great for re-settling after 45 minutes and finding a technique to quickly re-settle your baby if they need more sleep.

## WHEN CAN MY BABY SLEEP THROUGH THE NIGHT?

Babies can physically sleep from 11pm-6/7am once they are 6.5kg, and only sleeping around 3.5-4 hours a day, but mentally babies often will wake for a feed in the night well past 6.5kg. If you are fine with this, and it is a quick feed and straight back to bed then you don't have a problem.

If you reach 12 weeks and baby is over 6.5kg and waking 2-3 times at night, I would look at how much day sleep baby is getting and if sleep props such as dummies or rocking to sleep is becoming an issue.

# HOW TO HELP YOUR BABY SLEEP THROUGH THE NIGHT





Once your baby is feeding well and has regained their birth weight, if they wake at night and it has only been 1-2 hours since their last feed, try following the above flow chart to see if you can quickly re-settle without a feed.

If you reach 12 weeks and baby is over 6.5kg and waking 2-3 times at night, I would look at how much day sleep baby is getting and if sleep props such as dummies or rocking to sleep is becoming an issue.

Slowly slowly slowly teach your baby to re-settle on their own.

Ensure they get 5-6 feeds between 7am and 10.30pm each day.

Ensure by 12 weeks they are staying awake for close to 1 hour 45 if their naps are at least 1 hour during the day.

Keep night feeds, dark, boring, with little - no eye contact or smiles with mum

Ensure baby is getting lots of natural sun light during the day during "awake" times.

## WIND, REFLUX, COLIC AND IMMUNIZATIONS

If a baby under 3 months wakes with an ear piercing scream after 10 minutes this is often wind. Simply pick them up for a burp then quietly re-settle for the rest of the nap, don't allow baby at this time to get up for a play, they have not had enough sleep.

Colic and reflux- try not over feed a colicky or reflux baby as this often makes the problem worse. It is very important you have a sleep plan for these kinds of babies, as over tiredness just compounds the problems of reflux and colic.

You may need assisted naps for 3 months until colic or reflux subsides.

People panic about immunizations, and you might feel you are just getting the hang of things and your 6 week imms are due, and you think this will throw everything. Try to book them for the start of an awake period, as you will have to wait at the dr's office for 20 minutes afterwards.

Feel your baby after their immunizations and the majority of babies actually become tired and sleep well after these, so don't panic!

## LIGHT AND THE EFFECT ON SLEEP

A key factor in how human sleep is regulated is exposure to light or to darkness. Exposure to light stimulates a nerve pathway from the retina in the eye to an area in the brain called the hypothalamus.

There, a special centre called the (SCN) initiates signals to other parts of the brain that control hormones, body temperature and other functions that play a role in making us feel sleepy or wide awake.

The SCN works like a clock that sets off a regulated pattern of activities that affect the entire body. Once exposed to the first light each day, the clock in the SCN begins performing functions like raising body temperature and releasing stimulating hormones like cortisol.

The SCN also delays the release of other hormones like melatonin, which is associated with sleep onset, until many hours later when darkness arrives.

Feel your baby after their immunizations and the majority of babies actually become tired and sleep well after these, so don't panic!

That is why melatonin is sometimes called the "Dracula of hormones" - it only comes out in the dark. Even if the pineal gland is switched "on" by the clock, it will not produce melatonin unless the person is in a dimly lit environment. In addition to sunlight, artificial indoor lighting can be bright enough to prevent the release of melatonin.

Melatonin levels peak between 3-4 months - so you might not notice huge improvements with a black room until 3 months, but a lot of babies start to be affected by light around 8 weeks.

Black out blinds are a great investment, and if you are creative there are lots of affordable options, including portable black out blinds for grandma's house or a hotel. Covering a buggy in a sun shade or a snooze shade is a great option when out and about.

## FINAL TIPS

- Hunger plays a huge role in sleep in a baby under 6 weeks old. If baby is not gaining over 150 grams a week they are possibly a little hungry all day and not very settled. See a lactation consultant about feeding to try to remedy this.
- Please try a swaddle - if baby busts out, buy a better swaddle. I love miracle blankets and mum2mum dream swaddles, and big flat muslin aden and anai swaddles at least 1.2m square.
- Keep a log of naps and feeds it is quick and easy to do and you can spot issues when things go pear shaped.
- Go for a walk once a day, remove the stress for at least one nap and get some fresh air. Your baby will enjoy the external stimuli too.
- If you sometimes pat and sometimes rock and sometimes feed to sleep your baby won't develop any deep rooted sleep association, these develop when we use one method every single time to get baby to sleep.

- Try to fit a split feed and bath into 60 minutes in the evening (after your 3rd or 4th nap ends). This will help prevent over tiredness kicking in.
- Start each day fresh - forget how bad the previous day was - if it was bad....
- Enjoy your baby these weeks will fly by.



# *Baby Sleep Consultant*

If you want some more help with your child's sleep,  
[get in touch](#)

Try our [Online Sleep Program](#)

[www.babysleepconsultant.co.nz](http://www.babysleepconsultant.co.nz)

We would love to help you and your family get the sleep you all need and deserve!

Remember sleep is a biological necessity, not a luxury!



## *Emma Purdue*

Emma is the owner and founder of Baby Sleep Consultant, she is a Certified Infant and Child Sleep Consultant, Lead Educator for Baby Sleep Consultant Training, Happiest Baby on the Block Educator, has a Bachelor of Science and Diploma in Education, she is a Gentle Sleep Expert and Mother of 3.