

Sleeping

Patience, praise and peace

There are many different reasons why babies do not sleep. It is normal for a baby not to sleep through the night. Feel confident in yourself to know whether your child is really distressed, uncomfortable (maybe they need changing) or just restless. Trust your instincts and respond to their needs.

Try to establish a regular sleep routine early on by putting them to bed at a regular time (day and night). Place your newborn baby on their back to sleep, in a cot in your bedroom for the first six months. Prepare a warm, comfortable place for them to relax in. Try to avoid always rocking your baby to sleep as this can become a habit. Adult beds are not designed for babies or toddlers and do not conform to safety standards. Only breastfeeding babies should ever be fed in bed and should be positioned on the outside of the bed and returned to the cot after the feed. Breastfeed at night on demand as this can boost milk production.

Reading to your child at bedtime helps them to unwind, and gives you some special time together. If your child is scared of the dark, try keeping a night light on.

Temperature

You can help your baby to sleep safe and sound by keeping the temperature in their room between 16-20°C. A basic room thermometer will help you to keep an eye on the temperature. Remove hats and extra clothing as soon as you come indoors or enter a warm car, bus or train, even if it means waking your baby.

Bed-sharing with your baby is never completely safe. It is particularly dangerous for your baby to sleep in your bed if you (or your partner):

- Are a smoker (even if you never smoke in bed or at home).
- Have been drinking alcohol or taken any drugs.
- Have taken any medication that makes you drowsy.
- If your baby was premature (born before 37 weeks).
- If your baby was low birth weight (less than 2.5kg).
- If you or your partner are overweight.

It is very dangerous to fall asleep with your baby on a sofa, armchair or settee and it is also risky to allow a baby to sleep alone in an adult bed.

A safe sleeping environment

1. Place your baby in the 'feet to foot' position i.e. baby's **feet** at the **foot** of the cot.

2. Newborn babies should sleep in a cot in parent's bedroom or room where you are during the day for at least the first six months.
3. Make sure baby is not too hot nor too cold.
4. Put baby to sleep on their back to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), also known as cot death.
5. Keep baby's head uncovered.
6. Do not smoke and keep the house smokefree.
7. Do not place any pillows, stuffed animals, toys or bumper pads in the cot.
8. No heavy or loose blankets.
9. If a blanket is used, it must be tucked in and only as high as the baby's chest.
10. Crib sheets must fit tightly over mattress.
11. Use a clean, firm, well-fitting mattress. Mattresses should carry the BSI number BS 1877-10:1997.
12. These apply to day time and night time sleeps.

Source: www.lullabytrust.org.uk

1

You may notice that your baby's head is flat. Talk to your health visitor.

2

The solution is not to change your baby's sleeping position from lying on their back at night.

3

Put your baby to sleep on their back and let them play on their tummy.