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Laying Your Baby Down to Sleep

Your newborn is growing quickly, which uses a lot of energy. As a result, your baby may sleep for a total of 18 hours a day. Chances are, your newborn will not sleep for long stretches. But there are no rules for when or how long a baby sleeps. Use the tips on this handout to help your baby fall asleep safely.

Where Baby Sleeps

Where your baby sleeps depends on what's right for you and your family. Here are a few thoughts to keep in mind as you decide:

- A tiny newborn may feel more secure in a bassinet than in a crib.
- You may want your baby to sleep in your room during the first weeks after birth.
- If baby sleeps in another room, a room monitor can help you hear if he or she is awake.



Help Your Baby Sleep More Safely

Protect your baby by following these crib safety tips:

- Place a newborn on his or her back to sleep, during naps and at night. Studies show this is the best way to reduce the risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome).
- Do not put an infant on his or her stomach to sleep.
- Never lay a newborn down to sleep on a pillow, cushion, quilt, waterbed, or sheepskin. Doing so can increase a newborn's risk of suffocating.
- Make sure soft toys and loose bedding are not in your baby's sleep area. Don't use blankets, pillows, quilts, and pillow-like crib bumpers. These can raise a newborn's risk of suffocating.
- Keep your baby warm by dressing him or her in a sleeper or infant zip-up blanket.
- Fix or replace any loose or missing crib bars.
- Make sure the space between crib bars is no more than 2-3/8 inches. This way, baby can't get his or her head stuck between the bars.
- Make sure the crib does not have raised corner posts, sharp edges, or cut-out areas on the headboard.



Hold your baby for a while before putting him or her to bed.



Help your baby stay awake a little longer during the day. That way, he or she might sleep better at night.

Hints for Getting Baby to Sleep

Unfortunately, you can't schedule when or how long your baby sleeps. But you can help your baby go to sleep. Try these tips: