

SLEEP and your newborn



Learn what to expect from your baby's early sleep habits and tips for helping her slumber with this advice from **SIMONE CASEY**

It seems so simple: your newborn will feed, sleep, poop and look awfully cute. After all, she won't have the energy to do much else! But when it comes to your bubba's sleep, you may find yourself a little mystified. Her snoozing patterns may be erratic and will be interrupted by frequent waking to feed. She may surprise you by being able to sleep through the loudest racket one moment and then fuss about everything the next. She'll pay no heed to whether it's light or dark out. And as your little gets the hang of it all, there's probably going to be a bit of crying along the way.

Getting to know your baby's cues and what's normal for a newborn is often reassuring and helpful for getting through

the early weeks and months of parenthood. Here's what you need to know.

SLEEP AND AWAKE TIMES

During the first six weeks of life, the average baby will have between 12 and 20 hours of sleep over a 24-hour period, which will be fairly evenly distributed over the day and night. Your baby's sleeps may range from one to four hours in length and you'll find she stays awake for only about an hour at a time, including her feed (which could take up most of the hour!). Because of this, most babies follow a feed-sleep pattern, or a feed-play-feed-sleep rhythm during more unsettled times.

From six weeks to three months, a feed-play-sleep pattern can add a bit of

structure to your day, but it's still fine to stick with feed-play-feed-sleep, depending on what you or your baby prefers. You'll find bub's awake times are longer, generally about one to one-and-a-half hours, and sleep times are generally one-and-a-half to three hours. Bub may be sleeping longer stretches at night, but sleeping through the night doesn't generally happen until after the three-month mark, and only then for a small percentage of babies.

WHERE TO SLEEP?

It may be helpful to have a portable bassinette or sidecar cot so you can have bub

UNDER WRAPS: HOW TO SWADDLE YOUR BABY

Karitane suggests using a 1.5 x 1m light cotton wrap and following these steps to execute the perfect swaddle:

- 1 Fold down one long edge about 20cm. Place bub in the middle with her shoulders at the level of the fold.
- 2 Now gently place your baby's left hand under the fold.
- 3 Keeping your baby's left hand near her shoulder, take the top of the fold and tuck it under her legs.
- 4 Now take the left edge of this new fold and wrap it over your baby's body, then tuck it under her body on the right side.
- 5 Do the same on the other side but tuck the wrap under the left side.
- 6 Fold any extra length of the wrap under your baby's legs.

ADVERTORIAL

SLEEP SECRET

JOHNSON'S® baby has partnered with sleep expert Dr Jodi A. Mindell to design a three-step nightly routine proven to help bub sleep better in just one week. When used as part of a routine consisting of a warm bath, a gentle massage and quiet activities before sleep, JOHNSON'S® baby BEDTIME BATH® and BEDTIME LOTION® have been proven to help bub fall asleep faster and sleep better through the night. That's why JOHNSON'S® baby has been trusted by generations of mums!



SAFE SLEEPING

Create a safe sleeping environment with these guidelines from SIDS and Kids:

- ★ Sleep bub on her back from birth, not on her tummy or side, and ensure her face and head remain uncovered.
- ★ Make sure your cot meets Australia's current standards, has a firm mattress and that there are no quilts, pillows, bumpers, lambs' wool or soft toys in it.
- ★ Keep bub's environment smoke free.

- ★ Share a room with your baby for the first six to 12 months.
- ★ Breastfeed if you can.
- ★ If you choose to co-sleep with your little one, ensure no-one sharing the bed is a smoker, under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or overly tired. Don't swaddle bub (a sleeping bag is best), and keep her at the side of one parent, not between the two of you.

near you day and night at first. "This helps your baby to sleep better, as you synchronise breathing and heartbeats," says Andi Lew, author of *The Modern Day Mother: Babies and Sleep from Womb to One* (Heart to Heart Publishing, \$24.95).

As you watch your little one snoozing away, you may notice a lot of snuffling, twitching and other strange things as she moves through a new sleep cycle every 35 to 40 minutes. But don't worry – it's perfectly normal for babies to be loud sleepers! "The REM, or rapid eye movement, stage of sleep is a lighter, active sleep," explains Karen Willcocks, from NSW parenting service Karitane. This will be more pronounced if your little one is overtired. Listen to your baby's sounds and let them guide you as to whether or not a response is required – sometimes it's worth sitting back and working out if it's a tired grizzle that may mean bub is about to fall asleep, or a cry that means something else.

"Wrapping your baby snugly can help her feel safe and secure"

belly, so you may find rocking or walking helps at times when bub is very unsettled. ★ **FEEDING.** In the very early days, your baby may be fond of drifting off while feeding, which is normal. It's also normal for newborns to have an extra feeding frenzy at least once every 24 hours. During this time, your bub may "fall asleep on the breast but wake often to feed again and again, even after 20 minutes," says Andi. "This is called a cluster feeding, which is great for bub's sleep because it's during this time she is drawing the fatty part of the milk, which eventually puts her into a deeper sleep."

Look out for tired signs, too, which include grimacing, rigid limbs and jerky movements. "Responding to these cues and acting on them as they occur can help make settling easier," says Clare Pridham, clinical nurse educator at Melbourne's Tweddle child and family health service. For instance, "after seeing the first tired signs, you can start planning for settling, maybe change bub's nappy, then have some quiet time with relaxing cuddles."

You can also help your baby on the way to developing internal 'night and day' rhythms by exposing her to filtered natural light and sounds of daily activities during the day and keeping things dark and quiet at night.

When it comes to sleep and settling your little one, glean tips from sleep experts, health professional and family and friends along the way, but the best advice is to go with what works for you and only try to change things if something isn't working out. "Do what you need to do instinctively for your baby," Karen says. "If it's working for you and it's safe, why change it?" ★