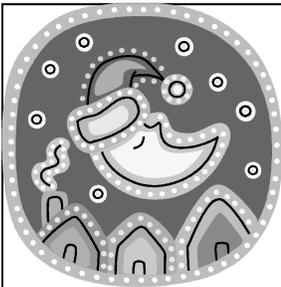




# Welcome Words

## On Sleep

**Hello New Parent!** We hope you will think of Welcome Baby Family Resource Center as your partner in parenting as you meet the wonder and challenges ahead. During the next twelve months, you will receive an edition of Welcome Words covering 6 special topics and including other resources you may find helpful. In addition to Welcome Words, Welcome Baby offers other services and classes that are described in our quarterly newsletter and website: [www.welcomebaby.org](http://www.welcomebaby.org). You are also invited to call us at 919-560-7341 if you have questions or concerns. Welcome Baby is a program of Durham County and Durham County Cooperative Extension. We receive support from Durham's Partnership for Children - a Smart Start Initiative and NCHHS-Department of Community Programs



### Newborns and Sleep

For most new parents, a good night's sleep is a distant memory. During these first few months, nothing will seem more precious to you than six hours of uninterrupted sleep. Although it may not seem like it, newborns usually spend between 12 to 20 hours of their day sleeping. Like adults, babies have different needs for sleep. Most babies aren't capable of sleeping through the night until they are between 4 and 6 months old and weigh at least 13 lbs. A regular nap schedule will also take several months to establish, although your baby may have the same schedule for several days or even a week.

**It may help to realize that there's no such thing as normal infant sleep behavior.** While some infants seem to have their days and nights confused, others sleep only a couple of hours before waking to be fed or changed. To help your baby sleep longer stretches at night, try some of the following suggestions:

- \* During the daytime hours, try letting your baby sleep in a well-lit room near family activities. At night, move her to sleep in a darkened, quiet room. Handle night feedings in a businesslike way. Save playing, singing and talking for daytime.
- \* Begin establishing a bedtime routine: i.e. bath, feeding, stories. Putting her down when she's sleepy, but still awake, will help her learn to fall asleep by herself.

Babies like to move around and make noise when they sleep. Avoid picking your baby up at the very first sound. Often babies go back to sleep by themselves if not disturbed. However, you should not let your baby cry loudly for more than 15 minutes before picking him or her up.

- \* Wait until she's really awake and crying to pick her up for nighttime feedings. The only exception is a quiet, sleepy baby who is eating less than 6-8 times in 24 hours since she needs to be awakened to eat.
- \* Expect sleep patterns to be disrupted if you travel, if she's sick, or she's about to reach a new developmental milestone (such as turning over) or a growth spurt.
- \* Be kind to yourself. Sleep deprivation is emotionally and physically draining. While it is tempting to do some chores when your baby's asleep, try to rest or nap, and take heart — eventually she will begin to sleep for longer stretches at night.

### How the Rhythm of Routines Can Help

By the end of her third month, it's likely that your baby will have a fairly regular routine. A typical schedule might be: baby wakes up about the same time every morning, has breast or bottle feeding, is awake briefly, naps, has lunch, naps, has another feeding, has a longer period of being awake, another meal and a nap. Some parents wake their baby to eat again before they go to bed, say at about 11 p.m. Your baby may go to sleep again and sleep for as long as six hours.

continued on next page

## Routines continued from previous page

If your baby doesn't develop a regular schedule, you can take the lead. Choose the best time to schedule baths, outings and bedtimes. Once you've worked out a routine, try to stick to it. If feedings are coming too close together, you may be able to gradually stretch the interval by singing or playing with her for a few minutes first. Frequent nursing may be a response to boredom (but it may also indicate a growth spurt). Your milk supply is often diminished in the evenings, which may mean more frequent nursing.

A regular bedtime allows you and your partner some time alone together, which is important for the entire family. If one of you spends 10 to 30 minutes doing something quiet with the baby, such as looking at a book, singing softly, or rocking, she'll begin to associate this ritual with bedtime.

If at 3 months she's waking during the night, it's OK to let her cry for up to 15 minutes, then pick her up. By the time you've calmed her, you've probably lengthened the interval between feedings by 30 minutes.

Be as businesslike as you can during these late night wakings. Keep the lights dim and the conversation to a minimum. Once she's settled into a good sleeping pattern, don't be disappointed when it's disrupted. Illness, teething, or a growth spurt will probably change the schedule, but within a few days you should both be getting to sleep again.

Try to set a regular time for you and your partner to enjoy each other without the baby. Make arrangements for a sitter once a week, or trade childcare with another family. Taking time for yourselves is good for you and your baby.



## REDUCING THE RISK OF SIDS



The causes of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) are unknown. Most SIDS deaths are associated with sleep. African-American and Native American infants are more likely to die of SIDS than other infants. More boys than girls experience SIDS. Because most cases happen when a baby is sleeping, SIDS is sometimes called "crib death." Cribs do not cause SIDS, but other sleep issues can increase your baby's risks. The following guidelines offered by the American Pediatric Association will help reduce the risk:

- Place your baby on her back to go to sleep.
- Use a safety approved crib with a firm mattress and fitted sheet. Never put baby to sleep on a chair, sofa, water bed, cushion, or sheep skin.
- The safest place for your baby to sleep is in or near the room where you sleep but not in your bed.
- If bumper pads are used, they should be thin, firm and well secured to crib sides, and not **plump**, like pillows.
- Use sleep sacks. If you do use a blanket, place your baby's feet at the foot of the bed and tuck blanket around the crib mattress; the blanket should not reach higher than your baby's chest.

Keep pillows, quilts, comforters, sheep skins and stuffed toys out of your baby's crib. One may accidentally cover her face and she can't get it off, even if she is lying on her back.

- Don't let your baby get too warm during sleep; keep the room at a temperature that feels comfortable to an adult, 68 to 74 degrees
- **Do not smoke during pregnancy and do not allow smoking around your baby. Infants have a higher risk of SIDS if they are exposed to second hand smoke, One of the best things you can do for your own health and the health of your baby is to stop smoking.**
- Pacifiers may help reduce the risk of SIDS. However, if your baby doesn't want it or if it falls out of his mouth, don't force it. If you are breastfeeding wait until your baby is a month old before using a pacifier.
- **Give your baby plenty of "tummy time" when he is awake. This will help strengthen neck muscles and avoid flat spots on his head.**