

Sleep Patterns

You may hear that newborns “have their nights and days mixed-up”. In fact, the newborn wakes up frequently at night because she needs to eat every 3 to 4 hours. The typical newborn will have a cycle of eat, sleep, wake throughout a 24 hour period. This improves as your child gets older and can take more volume in feeds. Most babies will sleep 6 to 8 hours a night by the time they are 2 to 3 months old.

The most important factor of newborn sleep is safety. The risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is greatest in children less than 6 months old but may happen up to a year of age. Your pediatrician will recommend “Back to Sleep” which encourages parents to let their newborns sleep on their backs to help prevent SIDS. Side sleeping or “wedges” to help position children are not recommended. Infants should sleep in a crib or bassinet without toys, or soft bedding (pillows, blankets, etc). Co-sleeping is not recommended and increases the risk of suffocation and entrapment. Removing environmental smoke will also help to prevent SIDS.

For specific information on crib safety, go to www.healthychildren.org and search for “A Parent’s Guide To Safe Sleep”.



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