mooncub



The Baby Sleep Guide

Birth to 12 months, explained simply

Wake windows · sample schedules · regressions
safe sleep · night shifts · feeding amounts

START HERE

Hi, tired parent 🌙

This guide is everything we wish someone had handed us at 3am: the charts, the schedules and the "is this normal?" answers, in one place.

Read it in any order. Every page is short enough to read with a baby on your chest.

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Every baby is different. The numbers here are typical ranges from pediatric sleep guidance, a starting point, not a rule. This guide is general information, not medical advice. Always check with your pediatrician about your own baby.

BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE

Safe sleep ABCs

For every sleep, naps included, until their first birthday.

A

Alone

Their own sleep space. No pillows, bumpers, soft toys or loose blankets.

B

Back

On their back, every time. Once they roll both ways on their own, you don't need to flip them back.

C

Crib

A flat, firm mattress with only a fitted sheet. No inclined sleepers, loungers, car seats or swings for sleep.

- ✓ Room-share (not bed-share) for at least the first 6 months
- ✓ Wearable blanket or sleep sack instead of loose blankets
- ✓ No weighted sleep sacks or weighted swaddles
- ✓ Stop swaddling as soon as baby shows signs of rolling
- ✓ Keep the room comfortably cool; don't overdress
- ✓ Offer a pacifier at sleep time if baby takes one

Contact naps are lovely. If you think you might doze off, move baby to their flat, firm sleep space first. Sofas and armchairs are the riskiest places to fall asleep with a baby.

THE BIG PICTURE

How much sleep does a baby need?

Total sleep in 24 hours, naps included.

AGE	TOTAL SLEEP	NAPS
0–3 months	14–17 hours	4–6, all over the place
4–5 months	12–16 hours	3–4
6–8 months	12–16 hours	2–3
9–12 months	12–16 hours	2
12–24 months	11–14 hours	1–2

What this means in real life

- **Newborns don't know day from night yet.** Bright, chatty days and dark, boring nights help their body clock along.
- **Long night stretches come with time.** Many babies still wake to feed at 6 months and beyond, and that's normal.
- **Look at the week, not one bad day.** A short night is usually balanced out by the next few days.

If your baby is mostly happy, feeding well and growing, they're probably getting the sleep they need, even if it doesn't match a chart.

THE MOST-ASKED QUESTION

Wake windows by age

How long a baby is usually awake between sleeps, including feeds and diaper changes.

AGE	WAKE WINDOW
0–4 weeks	35–60 minutes
1–3 months	60–90 minutes
3–4 months	75–120 minutes
5–7 months	2–3 hours
7–10 months	2½–3½ hours
10–14 months	3–4 hours

Tip The first window of the day is often the shortest, and the one before bedtime the longest.

A starting point, not a rule. If your baby is clearly sleepy early, follow the baby, not the clock.

READ YOUR BABY

Sleepy or hungry?

😴 Sleepy

- Yawning
- Rubbing eyes or ears
- Staring off, "zoning out"
- Red eyebrows or eyelids
- Turning away from you
- Jerky movements, fussing

🍼 Hungry

- Rooting (turning to search)
- Hands to mouth
- Lip smacking
- Sucking on fists
- Fussing that builds
- Crying is a late sign

Was that wake window too short or too long?

Too short	Chats, plays or laughs in the crib. Fights the nap, then sleeps briefly.
Too long	Melts down, arches, cries hard. Hard to settle, then wakes after 30–40 minutes.
Just right	Settles within 10–20 minutes with a little help.

Adjust by 10–15 minutes at a time and give each change a few days.

THE FOURTH TRIMESTER

Newborn weeks 1–6

Week 1	Sleeps most of the day, feeds 8–12 times in 24 h. Milk comes in around day 2–5. Losing a little birth weight is normal.
Week 2	Back to birth weight by about 10–14 days. Short alert windows of 30–60 minutes.
Week 3	A growth spurt is common. Evening cluster feeding ("feeds every hour") is normal.
Weeks 4–5	More awake and more aware. Fussy evenings are common.
Week 6	Crying often peaks around 6–8 weeks, then eases. First social smiles 🥹

Call your pediatrician for: fewer than 6 wet diapers a day after day 5, yellow skin that spreads or deepens, a baby who is very hard to wake for feeds, or any fever (100.4°F / 38°C or higher) under 3 months.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

2 months

4–5 naps | wake windows 60–90 min

7:00	Wake up + feed
8:15	Nap 1 (till ~9:30)
9:30	Feed + play
10:45	Nap 2 (till ~12:00)
12:00	Feed + play
1:15	Nap 3 (till ~2:30)
2:30	Feed + play
3:45	Nap 4 (till ~4:30)
4:30	Feed + play
5:45	Catnap, 20–30 min
7:30–9:00	Bedtime. Expect 2–3 night feeds.

At this age naps are messy: 30 minutes or 2 hours are both normal. Contact naps and naps on the go count.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

4 months

3–4 naps | wake windows 1¼–2 h

7:00	Wake up + feed
8:30	Nap 1 (till ~9:45)
9:45	Feed + play
11:30	Nap 2 (till ~12:45)
12:45	Feed + play
2:30	Nap 3 (till ~3:15)
3:15	Feed + play
5:00	Catnap, 30 min (optional)
5:30	Feed + play
7:30	Bath, feed, bedtime routine. Asleep by ~8:00.

Short naps (30–45 min) are very common around 4 months, when sleep cycles are changing. **See page 13.**

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

6 months

3 naps | wake windows 2–2¼ h

7:00	Wake up + milk feed
8:00	Breakfast (if started solids)
9:00	Nap 1 (till ~10:15)
10:15	Milk feed + play
12:30	Nap 2 (till ~2:00)
2:00	Milk feed + play
4:15	Nap 3, catnap 30 min
5:00	Dinner + milk feed
7:00	Bedtime routine, asleep by ~7:15

Solids usually start around 6 months, when baby shows signs of readiness. Milk is still the main food until 12 months.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

9 months

2 naps | wake windows 2¾–3½ h

7:00	Wake up + milk feed
8:00	Breakfast
9:45	Nap 1 (till ~11:00)
11:00	Milk feed, then lunch
2:15	Nap 2 (till ~3:30)
3:30	Milk feed + snack
5:30	Dinner
7:00	Bedtime routine, asleep by ~7:15

Crawling, pulling to stand and separation anxiety often shake up sleep around 8–10 months. Practice the new skills a lot in the day.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

12 months

2 naps (some on 1) | wake windows 3–4 h

7:00	Wake up + milk
8:00	Breakfast
10:00	Nap 1 (till ~11:00)
11:30	Lunch
2:30	Nap 2 (till ~3:30)
3:30	Snack + play
5:30	Dinner
7:15	Bedtime routine, asleep by ~7:30

Most babies drop to one nap between 12 and 18 months. Signs: refusing nap 2 for 1–2 weeks straight, or nap 1 pushing bedtime late.

WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?!

The 4-month sleep regression

It's not really a step backwards. Your baby's sleep is growing up.

Before: newborns sleep in two simple stages and drop into deep sleep fast.

Around 3–4 months: sleep becomes cycles, more like ours, with lighter sleep between them. At the end of each cycle, your baby surfaces.

So: if they fell asleep being fed, rocked or held, they may wake up looking for that again, every 45 minutes to 2 hours.

For most babies it settles within **2–6 weeks**. It isn't something you caused.

SURVIVAL PLAN

Getting through the regression

- ✓ **Same bedtime routine every night**: same order, same words, 20–30 minutes.
- ✓ **Drowsy but awake, sometimes.** Practice once a day (bedtime is easiest) so baby learns to link cycles.
- ✓ **Protect daytime sleep.** An overtired baby fights sleep harder at night. Watch the wake windows (page 5).
- ✓ **Dark room, white noise.** Keep the noise soft, roughly a quiet shower, and the machine away from the crib.
- ✓ **Early bedtime on bad-nap days.** 30 minutes earlier is fine.
- ✓ **Tag-team the nights.** See the shift plan on page 16.

Keep a simple log for a week: bedtime, wake-ups, naps. It's much easier to see it getting better on paper than at 3am.

My log this week

WIND DOWN

A bedtime routine that works

Short, boring and the same every night. That's the magic.

1	Bath or a warm wash (a bath every night isn't needed)
2	Fresh diaper, pajamas, sleep sack
3	Feed in a dim room
4	Book or song, the same one every night
5	Lights out, white noise on, a cuddle
6	Into the crib on their back, drowsy if you can

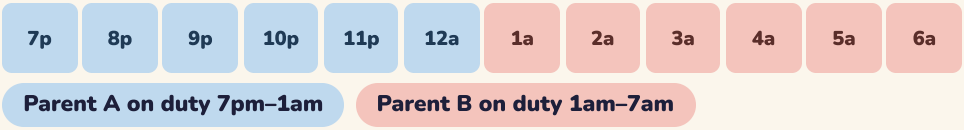
Tip If a feed sends baby fully to sleep, move it earlier in the routine, before the book.

Start a routine whenever you like. From about 6–8 weeks babies begin to recognize the pattern.

FOR TWO TIRED PARENTS

The split-shift night plan

Instead of both half-waking all night, each of you gets one protected block of sleep.



- The off-duty parent sleeps in another room with earplugs.
- Breastfeeding? Pump before bed so the first shift has a bottle, or bring baby to you for one feed and hand back.
- Write every feed and wake-up in one shared place, so nobody has to ask "when did she last eat?"
- Swap shifts every week so nobody is always on the 3am feed.
- No scorekeeping at 3am. You're on the same team.

Our plan: A _____ to _____ · B _____ to _____

BOTTLE AMOUNTS

How much milk, by age?

Typical amounts for formula or expressed milk. Breastfed babies feed on demand.

AGE	PER FEED	HOW OFTEN
First days	½–2 oz	every 2–3 hours
2–4 weeks	2–3 oz	every 2–3 hours
1–2 months	3–4 oz	every 3–4 hours
2–4 months	4–6 oz	every 3–4 hours
6 months	6–8 oz	4–5 times a day

- Breastfed newborns usually feed **8–12 times in 24 hours**.
- Follow hunger and fullness cues over the chart. Fullness looks like turning away, slowing down or relaxed hands.
- Wet diapers are your best check: 6 or more a day after the first week.

Worried about weight gain or feeding? Your pediatrician or a lactation consultant can check.

PLEASE DON'T

Sleep "hacks" that aren't safe

- ✕ **Rice cereal in the bottle "to sleep longer"**: no proven benefit, and a choking risk.
- ✕ **Tummy sleeping "for deeper sleep"**: always on the back, every sleep, until age 1.
- ✕ **Bumpers, pillows, soft toys**: an empty crib is the safest crib.
- ✕ **Inclined sleepers or sleeping in a swing or car seat**: move baby to a flat surface.
- ✕ **Weighted sleep sacks**: not recommended for infant sleep.
- ✕ **"Keep them up all day so they sleep at night"**: overtired babies usually sleep worse.
- ✕ **White noise as loud as possible**: keep it soft and away from the crib.

What actually helps: a consistent routine, a dark room, age-appropriate wake windows and patience. Most sleep "problems" are phases.

TRUST YOUR GUT

When to call the doctor

Call emergency services if your baby has blue or grey lips, stops breathing, or you can't wake them.

Call your pediatrician if your baby:

- is under 3 months with a temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher
- pauses in breathing, gasps or snores loudly most nights
- is unusually floppy or very hard to wake
- has far fewer wet diapers than usual
- cries in a way that feels different and won't settle
- or anything else worries you. That's always reason enough.

Pediatrician: _____

Out-of-hours number: _____



You're doing better than you think 🌙

We're building **Mooncub**, a baby sleep app that turns everything in this guide into a gentle plan made for your baby.

You're on the early list. We'll email you when it's ready.

Reply to our email and tell us your #1 sleep struggle