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## Recognizing A Baby's Sleep Patterns

By Adwina Jackson

It's true, the number one milestone most parents seek look forward to is the day (or night) their newborn starts sleeping through the night.

You don't have to suffer endless night after night without sleep however, even with a newborn.

Baby's actually follow certain sleep patterns, and if you get to know what these patterns are you'll start sleeping more soundly and better the times you do have a chance to get some sleep!

Baby's don't actually sleep at the same intervals adults do. They actually sleep very unsoundly. Their sleep is full of interruptions because their sleep cycle is not yet fully developed, thus they wake more often during the night.

Generally grown adults spend about six hours every night in deep sleep. This is the really restful phase of sleep you require to feel fresh and new in the morning. Usually time permitting another 2 hours are spent in light sleep.

Baby's generally have twice as many light sleep cycles as adults though, and their deep sleep cycles are much shorter than adults.

Baby's also have to LEARN how to fall back asleep, it is not a skill that comes naturally. Whereas adults might zonk out the moment their head hits the pillow, a baby will actually lie there looking for something to soothe them back to sleep.

Newborn's actually sleep a lot, approximately 16 to 18 hours every day, but they don't enjoy this sleep all at the same time. Most baby's will sleep in increments of only two to three hour intervals. Sometimes their internal sleep clocks are also confused from being in the womb, and they mistakenly believe that night is day and day is night. This means that they'll spend more of their time sleeping during the day than at night!

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Here's the good news, your baby's sleep patterns will eventually change, usually by about the time they are 12 weeks old. They will start sleeping about 14–16 hours per day, and many of those hours will be spent sleeping at night.

What can you do in the meantime to feel more refreshed?

– Sleep when your baby sleeps. No matter what time of day, take a nap whenever your baby does catch some zzz's.

– Open the blinds and keep things bright during the day. This will help change your baby's clock around so they spend more of their time sleeping at night and not during the day.

– Sleep near your baby at night. This will help comfort them and allow them to sleep more easily. There are many co-sleeper products available that allow you to sleep with your baby safely at night. Consider trying one until your baby is about 12 weeks old, when they are old enough to start sleeping on their

own.

– You can teach your baby to be a good sleeper with a little time and a little patience, armed with a little bit of knowledge about their sleep patterns!

Adwina Jackson is a wife and mother of a young boy. She's also the editor of Inspiring Parenting, an online source of valuable parenting information. Please visit

<http://www.InspiringParenting.com>

for

helpful and free parenting info. Observe your children's health, growth and development by clicking the website.

### **Helping Your Baby Sleep Well**

**By Linda Davis**

Should you let sleeping babies lie? Babies spend most of their day sleeping. It is during sleep that their body grows and gets stronger. Regardless of whether your baby is a heavy sleeper or a light one, it is important to take steps to enhance their sleeping patterns by recreating the environment of the womb.

First create a cozy sleeping area. Although cribs are the first sleeping space that most parents think of for their newborn babies, the space may be too large for your baby sleep in comfortably. Why? You have to keep in mind that for nine months his or her little body was snug inside the uterus. Having such a large space between their body and the walls of a crib can make them feel uncomfortable and

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scared. It's best to let your baby sleep in a bassinet or a baby carriage for the first few months after his or her birth.

Second, help your baby relax with soothing sounds. Inside the womb, your baby experienced the sounds of his or her mother's body. For many months your baby was comforted by the sounds of a heartbeat or the gurgling sounds of a stomach. These internal sounds helped to keep the baby happy and relaxed. When putting your baby to sleep the sound of a humming fan or the soft sound of a music box will help them sleep better.

Don't undermine your baby's sleeping habit by not letting them sleep too much in the day. If your baby has problems sleeping at night and this is interrupting your sleep, you may try to fix this problem by keeping the baby up during the day. While this may work with small children by causing them to be more tired at night, it is not recommended for a newborn baby. This will only cause your baby to become sleep deprived, which in turn will cause the baby to sleep more restlessly. A well-rested baby has healthier sleeping patterns than one that's tired due to being kept awake during the day, when they really wanted to be sleeping.

For the parents of a newborn child, a good night's sleep can seem elusive. It does get better as the child gets older, but in the meantime, you can take these few steps to encourage your baby to sleep well.

Linda Davis contributes to several web sites, including

<http://tocip.com>

and

<http://yetra.com>



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