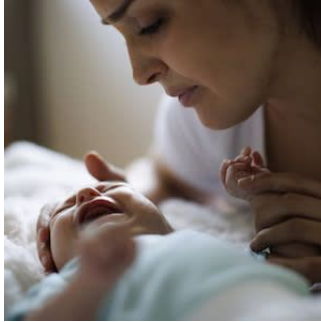


Is Your Baby Sleep Deprived? Issues and Treatments Contributing to the Problem



Sleep deprivation is one of the biggest challenges of new parenthood. It's important to remember that it is normal for newborns and young babies to wake up during the night for a feed or because they need comfort and reassurance.

However, there are some steps you can take to help things along and encourage fewer night wakings once your baby has left the newborn stage. Offering a feed right before bed can mean a longer stretch of sleep at night, or you could try dream feeding. The latter technique involves gently rousing your little one without fully waking them, feeding them, and settling them again. Doing a dream feed between 10 pm and midnight may result in a longer sleep during the night-time for both you and your baby.

Trust Your Instincts

It's really important to listen to your instincts. It is vital to seek medical advice if you think your baby could be unwell or suddenly waking at night when they were previously sleeping through. If your baby has been prescribed any medical treatment, it's worth checking whether this could be affecting their sleep patterns. Teething is also a common cause of [baby sleep deprivation](#), and while the first tooth usually erupts between the third and tenth month, it's not uncommon for one to appear earlier.

Signs of teething can include excessive drooling, fussiness, and chewing. You could try giving your baby a teething toy to chew on to ease the discomfort. Some are designed to be chilled in the fridge first for extra relief. You could also offer a gum massage or use a white noise machine in the room your little one sleeps to provide just enough distraction to help them drift off to sleep.

The Impact of Jaundice on Sleep

Jaundice is a [common condition that affects newborns](#). It is caused by an excess of bilirubin that a baby's still-developing liver cannot fully break down. This build-up results in a yellowing of the skin and eyes.

What is less well-known is that this build-up of bilirubin can make a baby more sleepy and less interested in feeding. This can impact the sleep cycle, leading to extended sleep periods. However, sleep deprivation may still manifest as the quality of sleep experienced is usually not optimal, meaning babies with jaundice are often fussier.

If you suspect your baby has jaundice, you should seek immediate medical assistance. In most cases, the condition will resolve naturally, but sometimes medical intervention is required, such as in severe cases or where jaundice seems to be spreading. Regular feeding - particularly breastfeeding - is a good form of complementary homecare, helping to flush the accumulated bilirubin from the system.

Acid Reflux

Another common condition occurring in young babies is acid reflux. This is where stomach acid flows [back into the esophagus](#), causing discomfort and often interfering with a baby's sleep. Symptoms of acid reflux can include irritability during and after feedings, frequent spit-up, hiccups, coughing, difficulty sleeping, and a refusal to feed. You should consult your medical practitioner as soon as possible if you think acid reflux may be affecting your little one. Medication may sometimes be prescribed to help resolve the problem and ease the discomfort.

You can take other steps to reduce the effects of acid reflux and help your baby sleep soundly. Try smaller but more frequent feedings, and keep your baby upright for about twenty to thirty minutes after being fed. It's also worth considering your own diet if you're breastfeeding, as the food you eat could be contributing to the reflux. Alternatively, a formula-fed baby could benefit from switching to a different type of formula - consult your paediatrician for advice.

Finding the Perfect Sleep Solution

All babies are different, and frequent night wakings are [an inevitable part of the new parent's journey](#). While some babies sleep for a six-hour or more nightly stretch by the age of three months, others take much longer to settle into this pattern. When taking steps to encourage healthy sleep, it's important to consider any medical or other issues or treatments that could potentially be contributing to disturbed slumber.

While this stage is an intense one, and it may feel at times (or often) that you'll never get another full night's sleep again, remember that this period is only a short one. Before you know it, you'll look back on your baby's newborn days and feel wistful for night feeds and quiet cuddles while the rest of the household sleeps.

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