

Your baby is growing and learning new skills, including how to fall asleep. This handout gives you information about your baby's sleep from six to 12 months and tips on how you can help support them in learning to fall asleep on their own.

## Fast Facts: 6 to 12 months

### Babies may:

- Sleep 12 to 16 hours in a 24-hour period
- Take two naps a day
- Stay awake for longer periods during the day and sleep for longer stretches at night
- Enter sleep in quiet sleep state
- Move between quiet sleep and active sleep about every 45 to 60 minutes
- Develop routines for feeding, playing, and sleeping around the same times each day
- Start to connect pre-sleep routines with going to sleep.

### Caregivers can:

- Ensure the baby's sleep space is comfortable, not too hot and not too cold
- Watch for and act on sleep cues
- Keep your baby active during their awake time through interactive play
- Establish a pre-sleep routine and follow it regularly
- Lay your baby down for sleep while in a drowsy state
- Wait a few minutes when your sleeping baby makes noises before picking them up to see if they return to sleep on their own.



### TIP

Lay your baby down when they seem drowsy and let them fall asleep on their own. With time, they will learn to fall asleep this way.

### Did you know?

Some babies may still wake up to eat during the night. When this happens, respond quickly, quietly, and calmly. If your baby shows signs of hunger, offer them a feeding. If they're still fussy after eating, gently place your hand on their chest to help calm them. It might take a bit of time for them to settle, but your touch helps them feel safe and reassured.



## Responding to baby's sleep cues

Your baby may have early sleep cues and may show you they are getting tired when they:	When your baby shows early sleep cues respond by:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rub their eyes or head</li><li>• Pull their hair</li><li>• Tug their ear</li><li>• Yawn</li><li>• Have a “glazed look” or lose focus in their face and eyes</li><li>• Are rapid blinking or have red eyes</li><li>• Turn away from an activity they were enjoying</li><li>• Suck their thumb or fingers</li></ul>	Ending the activity you are doing together
	Taking the baby to a quiet, calm space, if you can
	Speaking quietly, calmly, and in a soothing voice
	Starting your pre-sleep routine

Fussing and crying can be signs that your baby is very tired, especially if their early sleep cues were missed. Babies who are overtired might be more fussy and harder to settle down.



**TIP**

Responding to your baby's early sleep cues quickly will make it easier for them to fall asleep and help prevent them from becoming overtired.

## Pre-sleep routines

Falling asleep on their own is something your baby learns over time. They may develop “sleep associations” which are things they need to fall asleep like music or a fan. To help them learn to fall asleep on their own, make sure their sleep associations are part of their pre-sleep routine.

Start your baby's pre-sleep routine when you see their early sleep cues. Keep this routine consistent every night and with every caregiver. Simple and short routines help babies understand it's time to sleep. The routine should last no more than 20 to 30 minutes, and you can use a shorter version for nap times. Choose relaxing activities that your baby enjoys, like:

- Changing into their sleepwear
- Sharing a story together
- Singing a soothing song
- Lowering the lights
- Placing baby in their sleep area and saying, “good night.”



**TIP**

The more you stick to the same bedtime routine, the more the baby's sleep will improve.



If your baby's sleep associations or pre-sleep routine need to be changed to support family routines, speak with your public health nurse or healthcare provider.

## Here are some ideas to help your baby – and you – sleep better:

### 1. Daytime routines:

Try to eat, play, and rest at the same time each day. Don't skip naps, as this can make your baby overtired.

### 2. Connect with your baby:

Pay attention to how your baby is feeling. If they're hungry, feed them. If they're upset, comfort them. Respond to their needs.



### 3. Pre-sleep routine:

Aim for the same bedtime most nights. Follow a regular pre-sleep routine and use a shorter version of it before naps.

### 4. Be consistent:

Keeping the same routine helps your baby learn to fall asleep on their own faster.

### 5. Get fresh air and sunlight:

Spend some time outside with your baby during their awake periods everyday, when possible.

### 6. Avoid screens:

Don't let your baby look at phones, tablets, or TVs, especially before bed. The light from screens can make it harder for them (and you) to fall asleep.

### 7. Be patient:

Your baby might have trouble sleeping due to growth spurts, teething, or illness. Keep up with your routines, and they will likely return to their regular sleep patterns.

## Take care of yourself

After having a baby, taking care of yourself might look different, but it's still very important. Focus on your own well-being, rest, and sleep before worrying about things like cooking and cleaning.

Here are some ideas on how to do it:

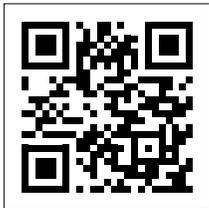
- Eat well, exercise, and find time to relax
- Adjust your sleep schedule to match your baby's bedtime
- Rest when your baby naps, if you can
- Be flexible with your daily routines
- Ask family and friends for help so you can take care of yourself and your baby
- Give yourself a break when you need it.



**If you feel overwhelmed, put your baby in a safe place, like a crib, and take a short break.**

## Learn more

[www.hpph.ca/sleep](http://www.hpph.ca/sleep)



## Need help?

If you think that your baby is sick and it is affecting their sleep, talk to your healthcare provider.

Your baby is unique. If these tips are not helping, connect with your local public health unit or your healthcare provider.

## Additional support

Huron Perth Public Health  
Healthy Babies Healthy Children program  
1-888-221-2133 ext 3575  
[hbcintake@hpph.ca](mailto:hbcintake@hpph.ca)  
[www.hpph.ca/hbhc](http://www.hpph.ca/hbhc)