



### Sleep facts

- Newborns sleep A LOT. Most sleep 14-16 hours of every 24 hours, however, they don't sleep in big blocks so you can expect them to be awake every 2-3 hours in the first weeks.
- Human babies feed frequently in the first few months to satisfy the demands for growth and brain development, as a result, newborn and young babies are accustomed to spreading their nourishment over a 24-hour period.
- Gradually the length between feeds will increase and by 6 months many babies can sleep through without a feed. Before then their tummies may not be big enough to keep them nourished through the night.
- Babies can be encouraged to go to sleep without their parents present. Strategies include placing the baby awake in his/her cot at bedtime and introducing a bedtime routine.
- These techniques are found to increase the proportion of babies who go to sleep without parental presence and the length of time babies sleep at night. However evidence shows that baby's should not be left to cry it out as this has negative effects on their stress levels.
- There is some evidence that introducing a 'dream' feed between 10pm and midnight can help the baby sleep for longer stretches at night without waking. This method can be used for both breastfed and formula fed babies. Encouraging Good Sleep Practices Research has proven that for the first 6 weeks of a baby's life it is more useful to react to a baby's need rather than impose a set routine.

Thereafter you could try the following:-

- Give your baby a fulfilling day with lots of different activities including calm times. However keep a daily routine, with regular playtimes, daytime naps and outings.
- **IDEALLY YOUR BABY SHOULD BE AWAKE WHEN PLACED IN THE COT** as this will help to teach your baby to fall asleep on their own without having to rely on being fed to sleep, cuddled to sleep or a dummy. If you do rely on these methods and you are happy with them then it is not an issue!
- You don't have to leave them to cry to teach them to sleep and in fact research shows that babies who are responded to when they cry actually cry less after the age of one than those who are left.
- Avoid naps before bedtime
- When night feeding, keep the lights low, and if you need to talk do so quietly, so your baby learns that this is not a time for play. Make feed times as boring as possible during the night!

### Helping prevent cot death:

- Place your baby on their back to sleep. Healthy babies placed on their backs are less likely to choke.



### Feet to foot



Place your baby with their feet towards the foot of the cot or pram, to prevent them wriggling down under the covers and make the covers up so that they reach no higher than their shoulders. Covers should be securely tucked in so they can't slip over the baby's head. Babies whose heads are covered accidentally with bedding are at an increased risk of cot death.

- Don't let your baby get too hot (or cold). The ideal temperature in a baby's room is 18 degrees Celsius.
- Stop smoking \* this includes all who live with you \* don't let anyone smoke in the same room as your baby \* don't share a bed with your baby if you smoke
- Your baby should sleep on a mattress that is firm, flat, well-fitting and clean. The outside of the mattress should be waterproof, like PVC. Cover the mattress with a single sheet. Use sheets and lightweight cellular blankets. **No duvets, quilts, baby nests, wedges, bedding rolls or pillows until baby is 1.**

**Remember cot death is rare so don't let worrying stop you enjoying your baby's first few months.**

