



## Understanding Sleep

Each baby develops their own sleeping patterns in their own time. Some babies need a lot of support to feel calm enough to fall asleep. Unlike us, their brains are not able to regulate the emotions associated with tiredness. But don't worry! If you respond to your baby's cues for tiredness and comfort consistently and sensitively, you can help improve sleep quality and duration.

### What to Expect

- It is normal for young babies to be unsettled at periods throughout the day and night.
- To fall asleep, your baby needs to be well fed and feel calm and secure in their relationship with you.
- Following a feed, play, sleep cycle helps prepare your baby for sleep.
- The average baby takes between 30 seconds and 30 minutes to fall asleep.
- Babies sleep in cycles of 20 to 40 minutes.
- Your baby is likely to stir and possibly fully wake at the end of a sleep cycle.
- Babies under the age of 12 months wake at least once per night.

### Tired Signs

- Recognising and responding to tired signs can help you better prepare your baby for sleep. Signs include:
  - Yawning.
  - Clenching fists.
  - Jerky movements.
  - Frowning.
  - Getting easily distracted.
  - Staring into space.
  - Irritability.
  - Crying (usually the last cue).

### Sleep Associations

- Sleep associations can help your baby settle to sleep. Common sleep associations are:
  - Wrapping your baby in a wrap or sleeping bag\*.
  - Quiet music or parent singing.
  - A dummy.
  - Rocking in arms or cot.
  - Patting to sleep.
  - Small soft toy (from 7 months of age)\*.

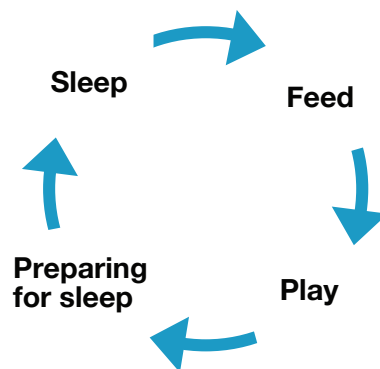
*\*Follow safety instructions with use of wraps, sleeping bags, or toys.*

- As your baby develops, some sleep associations may no longer be helpful – for example, using a dummy or rocking in arms.
  - Whenever a change is needed, expect that there will be unsettled behaviours like grizzling or taking longer to fall asleep. Help them cope through consistent and sensitive support.

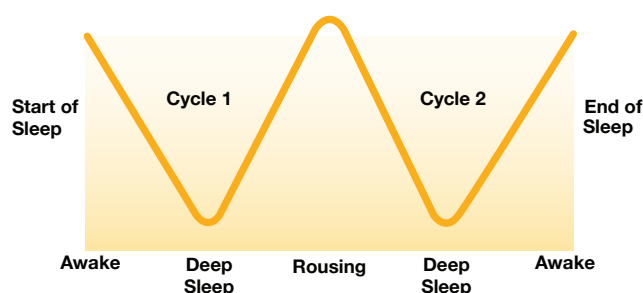
### Challenges

- There are many things that can impact your baby's sleep, like:
  - Development.
  - Temperament.
  - Sleep environment.
  - Relationship with parents.
  - Life events.
  - Physical health.

### Feed, Play, Sleep Cycle



### A Typical Sleep





## Tips for Better Sleep

### Sleeping Tips

- Provide exposure to daylight and age-appropriate play every day.
- Put your baby to bed in their own safe sleep space in your room.
- Respond to your baby calmly and predictably, as this can reduce the time it takes your baby to go to sleep or resettle after waking.
- Ensure your baby has a clean nappy, face and hands (bathing your baby at night may extend their sleep time).
- Offer healthy, regular feed patterns (avoid feeding your baby to sleep if you can).
- A quiet, darkened room in combination with soft talking, singing, reading or relaxing music may help with sleep.
- Eliminate screen time or bright lights before bed.
- Soothe and comfort your baby with affection before sleep, for example a cuddle or infant massage.

### Getting Your Baby to Sleep

- Once you have recognised your baby's tired signs it's time to prepare them for sleep using their sleep association (see understanding sleep).
- As your baby calms and relaxes, put them in their cot awake and allow time for them to settle.
- Stay close - your baby may wriggle and cry a little as they settle in for sleep (we all move around as we try to get comfortable in bed).

### More Tips for Better Sleep

- Listen to your baby and respond to their cries. If they become louder or more distressed try:
  - Soothing words or sounds.
  - Gentle patting on their body or cot mattress.
  - Gentle rocking in cot or your arms.
  - Use a dummy.
- It can take several attempts to settle your baby until they fall asleep.
- If your baby is getting upset, pick them up and check:
  - Are they wet/dirty?
  - Are they well?
  - Are they hungry?
  - Are they too hot or too cold?
  - Do they just need a cuddle?
  - Is it time to try something else like a bath, a walk in the pram or a rest in your arms?
- Sometimes nothing works - that's OK. Next sleep cycle you can try again.

### Safety

- If you are feeling overwhelmed and distressed, calmly put your baby in their cot, step out of the room and take some deep breaths and then return to settling your baby.
- Your baby is more likely to respond when you are feeling calmer.
- Always ensure your baby is sleeping in their own sleep space. Please see Red Nose for safe sleeping tips.

### Follow the Recommendation of Red Nose:

1. Sleep baby **on the back** from birth, not on the tummy or side.
2. Sleep baby with **head and face uncovered**.
3. Keep baby in a **smoke free environment** before and after birth.
4. Provide a **safe sleeping environment**.
5. Sleep baby in their own **safe sleeping place** in the **same room as an adult caregiver** for the first 6 to 12 months.
6. **Breastfeed** baby if possible.



**If you have a sleep & settling question call Karitane Careline: 1300 227 464**