



Easy Steps to Better Sleep: 6 to 12 Month Old Infant

WHAT IS SLEEP LIKE FOR YOUR CHILD AT THIS STAGE?



Good sleep is essential for every child as sleep has a significant impact on learning and behavioural development. Adequate sleep quantity and good sleep quality contribute to optimal brain function and the overall growth and health of your child. When your child sleeps well, it also reduces the disruptions to your family's sleep.

At 6 to 12 months of age, having a consistent bedtime routine and sleep schedule are essential to cultivate good sleep habits in your child. This is important to optimise growth and cognitive development in your child.



SLEEP PATTERNS



- At this age, you can expect your child to have longer periods of night sleep and 2 to 3 daytime naps, with an average total sleep duration of 12 to 15 hours over a 24-hour period.¹
- Your child may experience brief arousals every 50 to 60 minutes.²

DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES IN YOUR CHILD

Children develop object permanence from 6 months of age. This can contribute to separation anxiety which may lead to new sleep challenges.

¹ Health Hub. (n.d.). *Parent Hub: 0-2 Years – Baby Sleep*. <https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/183/parent-hub/baby-toddler/baby-sleep>

² Mindell, J. A., & Owens, J. A. (2015). *A Clinical Guide to Pediatric Sleep: Diagnosis and Management of Sleep Problems*. Wolters Kluwer Health.

SLEEP CHALLENGES

Frequent night wakings

Presentation

Brief arousals every 50 to 60 minutes are expected. Children who have learnt to self-soothe are able to put themselves back to sleep. However, children who are unable to self-soothe would cry out for attention, necessitating caregiver intervention to fall back to sleep.

Management

- Implement a sleep schedule with consistent bedtime and daytime naps. After 9 months of age, avoid napping beyond 4pm.¹
- Establish and implement a consistent bedtime routine. Make feeding the first activity of the routine to avoid associating feeding with falling asleep. A similar but shorter routine can be applied during naptime.
- Night feedings are not necessary after 6 months of age.² Parents can discontinue night feedings by gradually weaning your child off.
- If needed, allow your child to use the same transitional object (e.g., soft toy) at bedtime and naptime.
- Put your child to bed drowsy but awake to allow your child to learn to self-soothe.



¹ Mindell, J. A., & Owens, J. A. (2015). *A Clinical Guide to Pediatric Sleep: Diagnosis and Management of Sleep Problems*. Wolters Kluwer Health.

² Mindell, J. A., & Owens, J. A. (2015). *A Clinical Guide to Pediatric Sleep: Diagnosis and Management of Sleep Problems*. Wolters Kluwer Health.



USEFUL TIPS

Temporary sleep disruptions may occur, especially with acute illnesses. Parents should persist with consistent sleep routines and schedules while reinforcing self-soothing practices.

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