

SLEEP IN INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Sleep is very important to your child's health and well-being. Good sleep habits start right from birth. Every child is different, and the amount of sleep your child needs depends on their age and their activity level.

Birth to 2 months	16 – 18 hours (3 – 4 hr at a time)
2 to 6 months	14 – 16 hours
6 to 12 months	13 – 15 hours
1 to 3 years	10 – 13 hours

220-5010 Richard Rd SW
Calgary, AB T3E 6L1

P: 403 727 5055
F: 403 727 5011

info@infinitypediatrics.ca
www.infinitypediatrics.ca

Safe Sleep In Infants

Always put your baby on their back to sleep on a hard surface. This is the safest position to decrease the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). For the safest sleep, your baby should sleep alone in their own space, not in bed with a caregiver. Keep the crib/bassinet free of bumpers, blankets, pillows and stuffed animals. Discontinue the use of swaddles or sleep sacks with arms in when your baby is close to rolling over, by 3 months at the latest. Avoid any exposure to second hand smoke.

Healthy Sleep Habits

- Pay attention to your baby's cues and their "wake windows" to help you plan your baby's sleep
- Put your baby down when he or she is drowsy but not fully asleep
- Avoid "sleep props" to help your infant fall asleep (feeding/nursing to sleep, soother, being rocked and sung to)
- Avoid overstimulation and excessive play before bedtime. Keep the lights dim and turn off extra lights
- Consistent bedtime routine is important and should start early!

Naps and Bedtime

A consistent nap schedule and appropriate bedtime helps ensure your child doesn't become overtired. See various resources for specific sleep schedules by age.

Naps

- Each child is different but typical nap needs for age:
- 0-3 months: 4-5 naps per day (eat-play-sleep, repeat!)
- 3-6 months: 3 naps per day
- 6-14 months: 2 naps per day (transition from 3 to 2 naps around 6-8 months)
- 15 months- 3 years: 1 nap per day (transition to 1 nap at 14-17 months)

Bedtime

- Bedtime should be established as early as possible.
- 0-2 months: 8-9 pm
- 3-6 months: 7-8 pm
- 7-12 months (with transition to 2 naps): 6:30-7:30 pm
- 1-4 years: 7-8 pm

Sleep Difficulties

It is common for babies to have difficulty falling asleep or have night time awakenings.

The most common cause for this is “Sleep-onset association disorder”- this occurs when a child has an inability to “self soothe” and is dependent on external intervention. Examples include needing to be held, rocked or nursed, only falling asleep in the car and/or sleeping in a parent’s or sibling’s bed.

Most babies are ready to sleep through the night sometime after 6 months. After this age, the most effective intervention for sleep difficulty is behavioural modification strategies or “sleep training”.

There are various methods of sleep training. It doesn’t matter what method you use (they all work!) but *consistency is key*. There are “cry it out” methods, as well as more gentle sleep training methods, though sleep training usually includes some amount of crying as this is your baby’s only form of protesting change. This tends to be very short term and the long term gains in your child’s sleep, daytime happiness, and overall development are immense.

Resources

Books/Websites

“Sleep Sense”- by Dana Obleman (online book at www.sleepsense.net)
“Happy Sleep Habits, Happy Child”- by Marc Weissbluth
“The Sleep Easy Solution”- by Jennifer Waldburger and Jill Spivack
“Sleep- Top Tips from the Baby Whisperer”- by Tracy Hogg
Taking Care Babies www.takingcarababies.com
Baby Center www.Babycenter.ca
AHS Birth & Babies Sleep Class <https://birthandbabies.com/preparing-for-new-baby-and-beyond/>

Sleep Consultants

Sleep training can be very difficult as a parent and some families really benefit from the support of a sleep consultant. They help you develop a sleep plan and provide daily support for a period of time in implementation. There are many great consultants out there. Some examples:

Melody Patton <https://www.mpsleepconsulting.com>
Wee Sleep <https://wee-sleep.com>
Wee Bee Dreaming <https://www.weebedreaming.com>
*great sample schedules on blog
Mountains of Sleep <https://www.mountainsofsleep.com>