



Baby Care



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The Science of Sleep

Hello, newborn. Goodbye, sleep. At least for mom and dad. (Newborn babies do perfectly well on their bumpy sleep cycles.)

Here's the science behind baby's sleep and what parents can do to make it easier for everyone.

NEWBORN SLEEP

The good news is that newborns sleep a lot — 14-17 hours out of every 24. The bad news is it's not all at once. Newborns sleep in bursts of 2-4 hours, waking up to fill their tiny bellies and play. They don't yet know that people usually sleep at night and their brains haven't matured into a sleep cycle yet. Between one and three months, your baby will start to sleep longer at night, gradually working their way into a full

night's sleep. By six months old, your baby should sleep about 13 hours per day and be into a more adult sleep schedule of getting most of that shut-eye at night.

SLEEPING SAFELY

The safest place for your baby to sleep is by themselves in a bassinet or crib, says the March of Dimes. Even twins or triplets should each go in their own space. Lay the baby flat on a firm surface. Use

only a mattress made for a bassinet or crib. Make sure it fits snugly with no spaces between the mattress and the frame. Don't use sleep positioners such as nests or anti-roll pillows. The FDA says these devices can cause babies to die from suffocation. Don't keep crib bumpers, loose bedding, toys or other soft objects in a baby's crib, as those also increase the risk of strangulation and suffocation.

Your baby should sleep on

their back until they are 1. If your baby can roll from their back to their side or stomach while sleeping, it's OK if they change positions. Dress your baby in light sleep clothes without strings or ties. Don't cover their head, and stop swaddling once they can roll over. Give your baby a pacifier; it may help protect against SIDS. If you're breastfeeding, it's OK to wait until the baby is 3-4 weeks old or until they are used to breastfeeding first.

Top Baby Tech for 2023

There's nothing so simple or so complex as having a newborn baby.

Every year, there's a new crop of gadgets and doodads that promises to make parenthood easier. Here are a few for this year.

Fridababy Windi Gaspasser (\$31.98 for 20). Invented by a pediatric gastroenterologist, the Windi is a hollow tube that naturally relieves gas pains and colic.

Baby Brezza Formula Pro Advanced Formula Dispenser Machine (\$229.99). No more squinting at formula measurements in a dark kitchen. The Baby Brezza makes a warm, perfectly mixed formula bottle with just the push of a button.

Fisher-Price On-the-Go Baby Dome (\$84.48). This on-the-go bassinet makes for a perfect portable play space or napping pod. The canopy protects the baby from the sun and netting keeps bugs out. It includes removable toys and folds flat.

Rockit Portable Baby Stroller Rocker (\$69.95). A USB-rechargeable, adjustable device that rocks any stroller for 60 minutes so that your baby falls asleep while you relax.

Fandiar Baby Diaper Bag Backpack with Changing Station (\$39.95). A three-in-one diaper bag holds everything you need and expands into a complete on-the-go changing station. It has 13 pockets, including a USB



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charging port. You can put three toys in the changing station, which can also be a bassinet in a pinch.

Trelc Mini Handheld Stroller Fan (\$19.99). One side keeps baby cool, the other one points up at the parent pushing the stroller. Perfect.

Busy Baby Silicone Placemat (\$29.99). Made from 100% food-grade silicone that's

free from BPA, BPS, PVC and more, the placemat has four anchor points that tether it in place. It can also stick to windows, around shopping carts or bathtubs. It rolls up for storage or travel.

Baby Shusher Sleep Miracle Soother (\$34.99). Lull your baby to sleep with 15-30 minutes of shushing sounds that save your voice.

Feenm Water Bottle Cleaning Brush (\$16.99). Suction cup this bad boy to your sink and get every kind of bottle clean. It includes three detachable brushes that are great for every kind of bottle, including water bottles for mom and dad.

Angelcare Baby Bath Support (\$29.99). This futuristic baby bather fits straight into

the tub, cradling your baby safely during bath time. It's both ergonomic and durable, cleaning up easily and drying quickly.

Hatch Baby Sound Machine and Night Light (\$89.99). A nightlight and sound machine combo that you can control from your phone. Lull your baby to sleep or gently wake them.

Decoding Baby Formula

Commercial baby formulas are regulated by the FDA to meet nutritional and safety requirements.

They come in liquid and powdered forms. There's no brand of infant formula that's best for all babies, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says.

CHOOSING A FORMULA

Talk to your doctor before selecting a formula for your baby. Choose a container that is not expired and is sealed and in good condition. Make sure it's labeled for babies and not for toddlers.

The FDA and the American Academy of Pediatrics warn against using recipes to make homemade infant formula, which may contain too little or too much of some compounds, such as vitamins and iron. It could also become contaminated, causing your baby to become ill.

FORTIFIED FORMULAS

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends iron-fortified formulas be used up until the baby is one year old. At this age, the amount of iron in formula does not contribute to constipation. Also look for formulas that include docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) and arachidonic acid (ARA), which are believed



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to be important for developing a baby's brain and eyes.

PREDIGESTED FORMULA

Extensively hydrolyzed formula, often called predigested formula, has the protein contents broken down into smaller proteins that are more easily digested. These tend to be

costlier than regular formulas.

USING MILK

The CDC says not to introduce cow's milk until a baby is one year old.

Introducing milk before then can increase chances of intestinal bleeding.

Milk also has too many proteins and minerals for a baby's

kidneys to handle.

LACTOSE INTOLERANCE

Most of the formulas on the market today are based on cow's milk, but there are some that are made with soy for babies that are unable to digest lactose. Some parents also choose soy formula because it has no animal products.

Lactose intolerance tends to be a temporary problem in babies, usually after bouts of diarrhea or other illness. A true milk allergy is usually accompanied by colic, failure to thrive and bloody diarrhea. Up to half of infants with a milk allergy are also sensitive to soy proteins and must use specialized formula or breast milk.

Time for Tummy Time

While babies should sleep on their backs, it's important for them to spend time on their tummies while they're awake.

Tummy time helps babies develop their neck and shoulder muscles and improve muscle skills.

NEWBORN GAMES FOR TUMMY TIME

For newborns up to 3 months old, tummy time can help develop the muscles they need to roll over, sit up, crawl and walk. Make sure to stay with your baby during tummy time. Start tummy time by placing your baby belly-down on your chest or across your lap for a few minutes at a time, two or three times per day. As your baby gets used to tummy time, you can go for a longer amount of time.

TUMMY TIME FOR OLDER BABIES

Older babies need tummy time to help them practice lifting their head and chest and straightening their arms. Put a blanket on the floor and place your baby on their stomach for 3 to 5 minutes several times a day. Your baby may get fussy or frustrated, so try to do tummy time when your baby is fed, changed and happy.

As they get used to it, place them on their belly for longer periods. They should work up



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to about an hour a day by the time they're three months old. Make noise or shake a toy to get your child to look up and push up. You can also place a favorite toy in front of them to encourage reaching and forward movement.

SAFETY FIRST

Always stay with your baby

during tummy time. Have tummy time on a low, safe surface, not on a sofa or a bed where they could roll off or suffocate. Add some variety if your baby gets too fussy or frustrated. Sing songs, keep colorful toys nearby, or have some tummy time yourself. Sometimes they need more time to get used to it.

TORTICOLLIS AND POSITIONAL PLAGIOCEPHALY

Some babies have conditions with for which tummy time is a critical part of their care. Torticollis is a condition where tight neck muscles keep babies from turning their head. Tummy time for these babies encourages them to

look around.

Positional plagiocephaly is also called flat head syndrome. It happens when babies spend too much time on their backs in the first few months of life. This can cause a flat spot either on one side of the head or on the back of the head. Tummy time encourages the skull to resume its normal shape.



Keeping Babies and Pets Safe

For many families, there are two kinds of babies: the human ones and the ones with fur.

Most babies and most pets can coexist peacefully, given a proper introduction. Here's how to do it.

MAKE SURE EVERYONE'S HEALTHY

Visit the vet before the baby comes home and make sure your pet is healthy and up to date with shots and

vaccinations. If your pet hasn't been spayed or neutered yet, consider doing so now. Start training your pets before the baby comes home. Work on not jumping or begging for food. If you're concerned about aggressive behavior, consider bringing in a professional.

ONCE THE BABY COMES HOME

Have your pet greet mom first, then the baby. Let the meeting be on neutral territory, such as out on the sidewalk while your pet is leashed. Or you can have them meet in the house but with your pet in their crate so there's

a barrier between them and the baby. Stay calm and relaxed and reward polite behavior with treats. Avoid scolding your pet during the meeting. You want your pet to associate the baby with good things.

Even though your routines are all off kilter, make sure that you carve out some time for your pet. From day one, teach your children to be gentle with your fur babies. Don't let them tug on ears or tails, give pets human food or poke at them. Teach your child to respect your pet and their safe zones, such as their bed and belongings.

WHEN TO KEEP THEM APART

Some pets have chronic pain or may have sensory defects. They can have trouble adjusting to life with a baby. Don't make the mistake of thinking that because your dog loves you and has never been aggressive that they won't be aggressive with a baby that oversteps. If your pet is elderly or frail, it may be best to separate the pet and the baby as much as you can to prevent a risky situation. Your veterinarian can assess and help you treat any conditions that are making your pet aggressive, such as pain conditions or sensory deficits.

Teething Basics

Teething is an ordeal for both parents and children. Babies usually start teething at about 6 months.

The two bottom front teeth are usually the first to show up, followed by the two top front teeth.

SYMPTOMS

The symptoms of teething include:

- Excessive drooling.
- Chewing on objects.
- Irritability or crankiness.
- Sore or tender gums.
- Increased temperature but no fever.

SOOTHING SORE GUMS

Teething can usually be handled at home without the pediatrician. Try rubbing your baby's gums with a clean finger. A chilled — not frozen — spoon, teething ring or cool washcloth can also help. Don't dip these things in sugary foods; that can cause cavities. You can also give an over-the-counter painkiller such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen. A warm bath can also help, soothing their body and helping them relax.

The Mayo Clinic says to avoid over-the-counter teething remedies such as topical gels and teething tablets. Also do not give teething medications that contain benzocaine or lidocaine, and avoid teething necklaces, bracelets and anklets.

If you give them a teething biscuit, watch them eat it.



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Chunks can break off easily and lead to choking. Once the baby is six months or older, they can chew on cold raw fruit and vegetables to soothe their gums.

CARING FOR BABY TEETH

You should run a soft, clean

cloth over your baby's gums twice a day, once in the morning and once before bed. When the baby gets their first teeth, use a small, soft toothbrush to clean their mouth twice a day. Until they learn to spit at about age three, use a smear of toothpaste no bigger

than a grain of rice, moving up to a pea-sized dollop as they get older.

The American Dental Association and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recommend scheduling a child's first dental visit at or near their first birthday. You

can ask then about fluoride varnishes, which are recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force. Your pediatrician may be able to apply the varnish if your child doesn't have a dentist yet.

Car Seat Safety

Car crashes are a leading cause of death for children ages 1-13, according to the National Highway Transportation and Safety Administration.

That makes your choice of car seat and its correct use important in keeping your family safe.

FINDING THE RIGHT SEAT

There are four types of car seats: rear-facing, forward-facing, booster and seat belts. A rear-facing seat is best for your infant to use. It has a harness and, during a crash, cradles and moves with your child to reduce stress on their neck and spinal cord. Forward-facing seats have a harness and a tether that limits your child's forward movement during a crash. Booster seats raise the child so the vehicle's lap-and-shoulder belt fit properly over the stronger points of their body. When you use just the seat belt, it should lie across the upper thighs and be snug across the shoulder and chest. It should not rest on the stomach or across the neck or face.

NHTSA recommends that you keep children in a car seat for as long as possible — as long as your child fits in the manufacturer's height and weight requirements. Children should ride in the back seat until age 12.



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INSTALLING THE CAR SEAT

Just as critical as choosing the right seat is installing it properly. Pay close attention to your vehicle's and the seat manufacturer's instructions for installing the seat. After you're done but before your baby takes its first ride, have the seat installation inspected at a car

seat inspection station near you. Some stations even offer virtual inspections. You can find stations near you at [NHTSA.gov](https://www.nhtsa.gov).

REGISTER YOUR SEAT

Register your car seat with the manufacturer and ensure your contact information stays updated with them. This is

important so you can receive recalls and safety notices for your car seat. You can also sign up for NHTSA emails and notifications to keep abreast of recalls and notices.

Do not use your car seat after a moderate or severe crash, NHTSA says. Only use your seat if it was in a minor crash, which is defined as a crash in

which all of the following apply:

- The vehicle was able to be driven away from the crash site.
- The vehicle door nearest the car seat was not damaged.
- None of the passengers sustained any injuries.
- The air bags did not deploy.
- There is no visible damage to the car seat.