

Oxfordshire Breastfeeding Support - Normal newborn sleep

A summary

- ❖ **Babies need a total of 8-18 hours of sleep in 24 hours** - a very wide range.
- ❖ **Babies' feeding and sleep patterns vary widely**, so every day and night will be different. There is no obvious rhythm yet and this is normal. Comparison with other babies is rarely helpful. If your baby is growing normally and seems happy, their feeding and sleeping pattern is working well.
- ❖ **Human milk is optimised for babies to stay in close contact with their carers** and to feed frequently round the clock.
- ❖ **Babies have short sleep cycles (30-50 minutes)**. They spend a high proportion of sleep time in light active (REM) sleep, during which they wake easily: a protective factor against SIDS.
- ❖ **If you have your baby in your bed, follow safe bedsharing guidelines**. Most babies in the world have always slept with their parents, and babywearing works well for daytime naps.
- ❖ **All healthy children will sleep independently when they are ready**. If your sleeping arrangement stops working for you, you can change it.

Keep in mind

There are some situations (e.g. prematurity, smoking, alcohol use) which make it dangerous to bedshare. **It is never safe to sleep with a baby on a sofa.**

If you are tired but find it hard to sleep at night even when your baby is asleep, talk to someone. It can be a sign of low mood or anxiety.

*

