



# It is normal for your baby to wake up often at night.

*Newborn babies spend more time in light sleep, which also helps to protect their health.*

## Normal infant sleep patterns:

- Newborns spend more time in light and active sleep which helps them to wake more easily to eat, stay warm, and move around when they need to. Dreaming also happens more in light sleep which helps their brain to grow.
- As your baby gets older, your baby will sleep for longer stretches and spend more time in deeper sleep.
- Your baby's sleep also follows different light and dark patterns than adults. This is why babies wake up any time they need to, day and night, which can help keep them safe.
- As baby gets older, try:
  - Keeping the room dark at night
  - Placing in light during the day
  - Having a bedtime routine



Keeping baby's room dark at night, exposing baby to natural light during the day, and following a consistent bedtime routine can help baby to wind down at night.



**ALSO IN THIS SERIES:**  
 Baby Behavior Crying  
 Back to sleep  
 Sleep Surface  
 Sleep Training

## Let's Talk – Baby Behavior Sleep

Babies will sleep for longer stretches and spend more time in deeper sleep as they grow.

For content resources, visit: [dshs.texas.gov/SafeInfantSleep](https://dshs.texas.gov/SafeInfantSleep)

[dshs.texas.gov/SafeInfantSleep](https://dshs.texas.gov/SafeInfantSleep)



# It is normal for your baby to wake up often at night.

## Family and Caregiver Common Questions

### Why do babies need to wake often throughout the night?

There are many reasons young babies don't (and shouldn't) sleep through the night.

- Newborns spend a lot of time in light sleep, when they dream. Just like adults, they are more likely to wake when they are dreaming.
- If babies sleep too deeply, they may not be able to wake up if they get too hot or cold or if they need more air.
- Waking up at night can help your baby let you know what your baby needs to be comfortable and safe.

### What if my newborn doesn't wake up often enough for feedings?

Newborns should nurse at least 10-12 times every 24 hours. If your newborn is excessively sleepy and not waking to feed, you may need to wake up your baby.

It is best to use a variety of touch and sounds to wake a sleepy baby. Some examples include:

- Hold your baby in skin-to-skin contact on your bare chest.
- Change your baby's position.
- Remove your baby's clothes or change the diaper.
- Touch your baby gently in different places, like the tummy, hands, or bottoms of feet.
- Talk to your baby.
- Turn on the lights or hold your baby near a sunny window.

\*If you have tried the above steps and still have concerns about how much your baby is sleeping, talk with your baby's doctor.

### A lot of my friends have recommended that I sleep train my baby. Is sleep training safe?

It is understandable that new parents might be looking for answers to get more sleep. This is a time of adjustment for the whole family. It is normal for newborns to wake often during the night to eat or communicate other needs, so training your baby to sleep longer actually goes against their normal development.

Some things you can try to get more rest are:

- Take naps when baby does during the day.
- Limit visitors or other interruptions.
- Continue with good nutrition and exercise (like a short walk).
- Take a moment of quiet time while someone else watches your baby.
- Ask for help from family or friends to get you through this challenging time.

## How Do Babies Sleep?

Share this video resource from our partners at Texas WIC.



### Let's Talk - Circle of Support

Continue to share safe infant sleep information with parents and caregivers throughout the first year to increase their use of safe sleep practices!

For content resources, visit:  
[dshs.texas.gov/SafeInfantSleep](https://dshs.texas.gov/SafeInfantSleep)