
Typical sleep behaviour (2) – babies 3 to 6 months

Summary

- At this age, babies generally sleep 10 to 18 hours in a 24-hour period and need your help to settle and go to sleep.
 - Babies at 3 to 6 months still need to wake for regular feeding.
 - Your baby at 3 to 6 months is now sleeping a bit longer – usually in periods that last 2 to 3 hours.
 - From 3 to 6 months your baby might be having three daytime naps – don't worry if they aren't as each baby is different and sleeping patterns can vary a lot.
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Baby sleep patterns and behaviours at 3 to 6 months

By around three months of age, babies usually begin smiling and interacting with you.

Some babies start to have longer periods of sleep, and their sleep cycles develop more of a rhythm.

At this age, most babies sleep 10 to 18 hours in a 24-hour period.

They often sleep in periods that last 2 to 3 hours.

Every child is different, so don't worry too much if your child has different sleep patterns to those described here. If you are concerned about your child, contact **your local maternal and child nurse**, your doctor or the **Maternal and Child Health Line** on Tel:13 22 29.

Baby sleep rhythms at 3 to 6 months

We all have **sleep cycles**. These change as we develop and grow.

Babies generally nap three times during the day – but every baby is different and sleeping patterns can vary a lot.

Your baby is growing quickly, and they still need to wake for feeding.

Most babies also need help to settle and go to sleep at this age.

Settling your baby at 3 to 6 months

You can help your baby learn to **self-settle** and sleep more at night by:

- Putting them in their cot when they are tired, but still awake
- recognising and responding to **tired signs**
- using a positive and consistent routine, such as **feed, play, sleep**
- using positive and consistent **bedtime routines**

It is important to create positive sleep associations, for your baby. Some settling approaches may be hard to keep doing for the long term, such as holding your baby until they fall asleep. These can create negative sleep associations for your baby resulting in them needing to be held to fall asleep. You need to decide what is right for you and your family.

Feeding your baby at 3 to 6 months

Babies aged 3 to 6 months still need regular feeding.

Being breastfed or formula fed does not impact on the age at which your baby will sleep through the night.

If your baby is breastfed, giving them baby formula or starting solid food early (breastfed or formula fed) will not

help them sleep better.

Whether they are breastfed or bottle-fed, babies can learn to relate sleep with feeding. Over time, they may become dependent on feeding to fall asleep easily.

To stop your baby from associating feeding with sleeping, when you have finished feeding and playing with them, put them in their cot to fall asleep by themselves when they show signs of **tiredness**.

If you are worried about your baby's crying or if they are not sleeping or settling you can talk to your maternal and child health nurse, doctor or phone the Maternal and Child Health Line on 13 22 29.

Maternal and child health nurse visits are important

Victorian parents have free access to the **Maternal and Child Health Service**, which is a great support after your baby is born.

Specially trained maternal and child health will work with your family to help you care for your child until they are ready to start school.

As part of this service, you will visit a maternal and child health nurse in your local area at 10 key ages and stages in your child's development. These visits are important because they give you an opportunity to identify and address any issues and concerns early in your child's development.

Visits take place:

- following discharge from hospital (**home visit**)
- **two weeks**
- **four weeks**
- **eight weeks**
- **four months**
- **eight months**
- **one year**
- **18 months**
- **two years**
- **three and a half years**

Families can access the service at other times by telephone or through a centre visit.

Where to get help

- **Your local maternal and child health service**
- **Your GP (doctor)**
- **Maternal and Child Health Line** Tel: 13 22 29 – available 24 hours a day for the cost of a local call throughout Victoria
- **Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS)** Tel. 03 9419 3000
- **Parentline** Tel. 13 22 89
- **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)** Tel. 131 450 – available (24 hours, 7 days a week) for callers who speak other languages
- **National Relay Service** (24 hours a day, every day) – Speak and listen Tel: 1300 555 727, TTY Tel: 133 677, SMS relay Tel: 0423 677 767. **Captioned, internet and video relay calls are also available through this service.**
- **NURSE-ON-CALL** Tel. 1300 60 60 24 – for expert health advice 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

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