

Sleep helps your baby's growing brain

Why is sleep so important?

Your baby needs sleep to help his or her brain grow and develop.

A baby's brain at 35 weeks weighs only two-thirds of what it will weigh at 39 to 40 weeks.



35 weeks



39 to 40 weeks

Before birth, a fetus sleeps
20 to 22 hours a day.

A newborn baby sleeps
17 to 20 hours a day.



It is important that your baby gets the sleep he or she needs.

Not having enough sleep can limit the growth and development of the brain. This may have lasting effects on learning and behaviour.

Yes, babies needs two types of sleep: active and quiet sleep.

Active sleep	Quiet sleep
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Active sleep is most important for developing the brain and nervous system.• Active sleep is also called rapid eye movement or REM sleep.• During active sleep your baby's eyes move under the closed eyelids. Your baby's heart rate and breathing are irregular.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quiet sleep conserves energy and benefits your baby's brain, nerves and immune system.• Quiet sleep is also called non-REM sleep.• During quiet sleep your baby's eyes do not move. Your baby's heart rate and breathing are more regular.

How can we help my baby get enough sleep?

All of us can:

- Learn about the importance of sleep.
- Keep lights and sounds low to encourage sleep.
- Position your baby comfortably with blankets and rolls.
- Allow your baby to wake naturally before providing routine care.
- Gently touch and hold your baby.

Parents can also have as much skin-to-skin contact with their baby as possible.

**You are the most important person in your baby's life.
By protecting your baby's sleep, you are helping your baby
grow and develop in the best possible way.**