

and that they are naturally tired. At this time, the hormones, chemicals and body temperature are the perfect combination for sleep and given the opportunity in the right environment, your baby can slope off to sleep with ease. If inadvertently, they become overtired, that changes the body's chemistry and they, in turn, fight sleep, finding it hard to go to sleep and also to stay asleep for as long as they may actually need.

– Start the bedtime routine

As soon as your baby can respond to smiles and chats, that is a good time to start to introduce a bedtime routine. Nothing fancy, just a predictable sequence of events that they can learn to associate with going to sleep. Don't restrict this to just bedtime, extend its use to all sleep times and give your child a reasonable opportunity to go from active to sleepy to make the process simpler. Don't worry if your baby is older already, you can start to create positive sleep associations at any time and they will be just as effective.

– Don't be overly attentive

Avoid always rocking, nursing, feeding, walking your baby all the way to sleep all of the time. The easiest time to fall asleep is bedtime, so start by allowing them to piece their sleep together at bedtime while they lie in their cot or Moses basket. You don't have to leave them, stay with them reassuring and gently soothing them as they learn to connect the dots.

– Make sure the environment is right

Make sure that you are creating the right environment for sleep. Bear in mind that from four months of age their sleep resembles the nature of our sleep with only a qualitative difference: they need more and they dream more. So consider how well you can sleep with the lights on, television and radio on in the

background or constant motion and attempt to create an environment that promotes sleep. A dim environment to enhance the sleep hormone and a lack of motion that allows the brain to go into a restoring mode. External noise can contribute to cutting sleep short, so be mindful of that also. White noise can be very effective at soothing your baby, without being a negative and also can help to block out external noises.

– Work out how much sleep your child needs

Don't underestimate your child's need for sleep. Establish, based on their age, how much sleep they need. Some need a little more, some need a little less, but the variations are generally not huge. The amount of sleep your baby gets during the day will have a positive impact on night-time sleep. Research has shown that the more rested a child is at bedtime the fewer nocturnal awakenings they will have. Although mastering day-time naps can be a challenge, it is one definitely worth mastering, as most children will nap well beyond the age of three years.

– Be consistent with your routine

Above all, ensure that you are consistent. Avoid giving your child mixed messages by doing a variety of different things with regards to their sleep. If you sometimes rock them, sometimes feed them, sometimes change their sleeping location during the night, sometimes let them cry, sometimes get them up when it is still sleep time, they will ultimately be confused, unnerved and potentially feel insecure, as well as ingraining unwelcome night-time activity. Due to the behavioural component of sleep it is vital that you are consistent in your approach.

Pick a response plan and stick to it. Develop a host of soothing techniques that responds to your infant but also does not confuse them, helps to re-enforce healthy, safe sleep habits and that can be developed as your baby gets older and that you can implement during times of sickness and teething.

Think about your own baby

Concentrate on your infant and don't worry about what other babies may or may not be doing. As long as you establish positive sleep associations and help to teach your baby how to fall asleep without lots of intervention, they will master the skills and consolidate their sleep when they are able to.

More info...

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Kelkin Baby Vitamin D3

Kelkin have launched a new product for it's Kelkin Kids Range – Kelkin Baby Vitamin D3, which has been developed based on the recommendation to parents and guardians from the Health Service Executive (HSE), the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) and the Department of Health and Children stating that all babies from birth up to 12 months, both breastfed or formula fed, should be given a daily supplement of 5 micrograms (5µg) of Vitamin D. Each three drop dose of Kelkin Baby Vitamin D3 provides 100% of the RDA of 5 micrograms (5µg) of D3 in cholecalciferol form - the preferred and most recommended form of vitamin D supplement for infants. Containing no preservatives, artificial colours, flavours or sweeteners, the product is gluten, soya, dairy and nut free and suitable for vegetarians. Available in pharmacies nationwide at a RSP of €8.49. www.kelkin.ie



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