



LAKE COUNTRY
SLEEP

Newborn Sleep Guide

Laying a healthy sleep foundation...from the start!

ERIN MEINEL
INFANT AND CHILD SLEEP CONSULTANT
ERIN@LAKECOUNTRYSLEEP.COM

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Introduction

As you welcome your little one to the world, remember that your primary goal as a parent to this new baby is to provide a safe and loving attachment, and focus on bonding, eating, and sleeping. Don't hesitate to ask for help, and try to make time for yourself. Prioritizing your wellbeing is only going to help you be a better parent to your baby.

If feeding the baby, feeding yourself, and brushing your teeth are the only things you get done in a day, that's okay! Give yourself some grace these first few months, and take it one day at a time. In their first few weeks of life, your baby will do a lot of eating and a lot of sleeping and very little else! It is important to allow them to do as much eating and sleeping as they want during the first few weeks, but there are a few things you should keep in mind – that's what this guide is for!

In my opinion, healthy parental attachment promotes independence and allows for a child to explore the world around them while simultaneously knowing there is a safe and loving space for them to come back to whenever they need it – their parents' arms.

01 Goals for Your Newborn

When it comes to sleep, the primary goal of the newborn phase is to work towards laying a healthy sleep foundation with routines, getting to know your baby and how to best respond to them, and **occasionally** practicing independent sleep skills. You can start implementing pieces of this guide as you feel comfortable, and after breastfeeding has been well established (if that's how you're feeding). The more you practice, the better your baby will get over time. And don't stress - there's plenty of room for those newborn snuggles too!

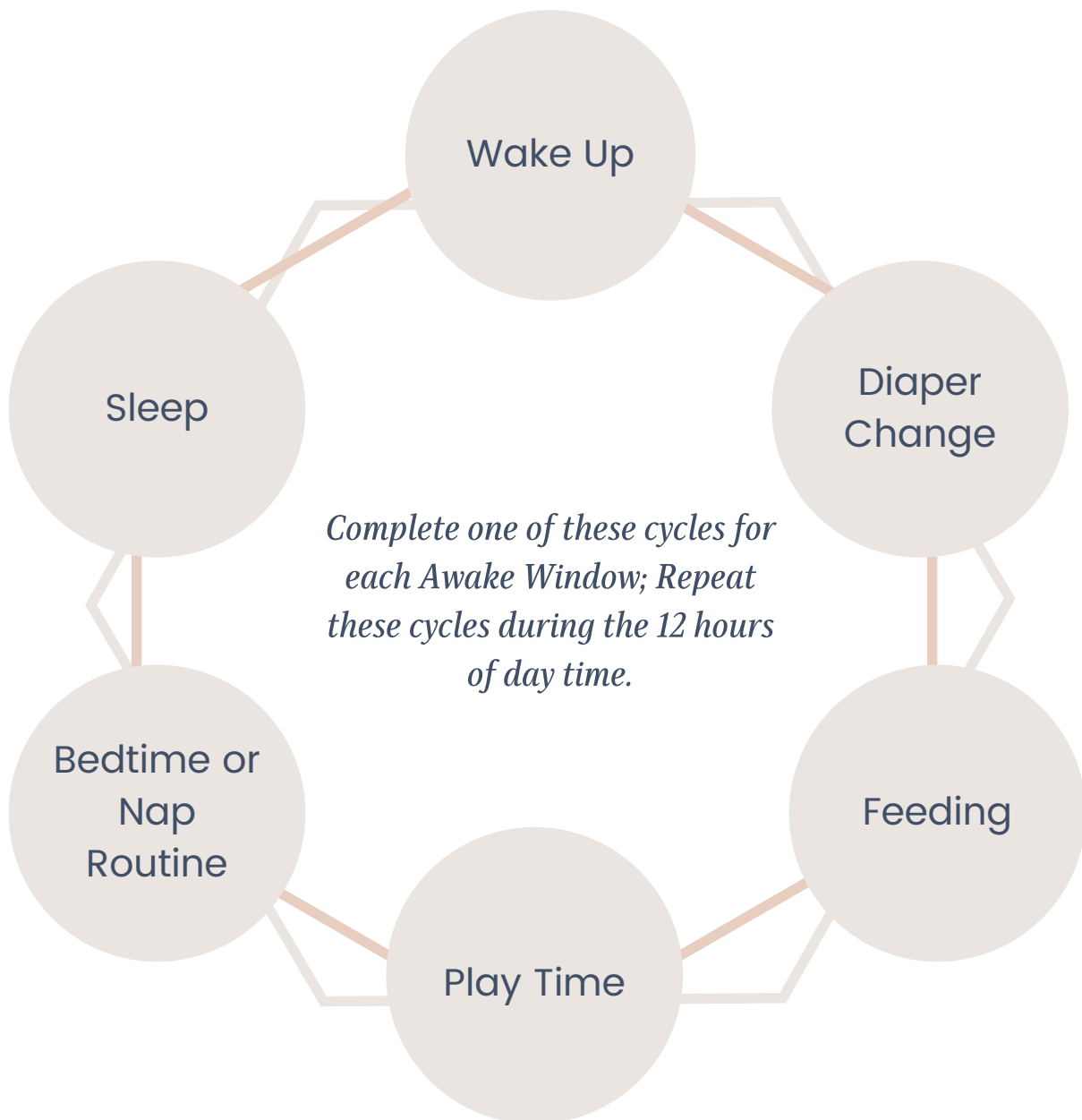
02 The Magic of Routines

Routines are a beautiful thing....and you can start implementing routines with your newborn as soon as they enter the world! Routines provide a loose structure for your baby, something all children thrive with - and they help your baby learn what comes next.



The Eat/Play/Sleep Routine

When you repeatedly follow the same pattern and routines throughout the day, your baby will learn what comes next. And it will become easier and easier to lay them down to practice independent sleep.



Before you know it, once you start the bedtime or nap time routine, your baby will be yawning because they know what comes next...sleep!

Bedtime and Nap Routines

The specific routine you use for your baby when preparing them for bed will help cue their body that sleep is coming.

Bedtime Routine

1. Bath (if needed)
2. Diaper and jammies on
3. Read a book or two
4. Nurse or bottle feed – keep baby awake
5. Hugs, kisses, cuddles, and lay down in crib slightly drowsy or awake

Nap Routine

1. Diaper change
2. Read one book
3. Hugs, kisses, cuddles, and lay down in crib slightly drowsy or awake

Because your baby may feed for 20-30 minutes at a time, they are pretty much ready for a nap after only a little bit of awake time during the day. The average "awake window" for a newborn is only 45-60 minutes, so really, after a 30 minute feed, you might do 2 minutes of tummy time and then start the nap routine so

they're being laid down around that 45-60 minute window. You want to do what you can to prevent overtiredness. As your baby gets beyond 16 weeks of age, "drowsy" won't work anymore, and you'll have to start laying them down completely awake. I also find that when your baby initially cries after waking, they're hungry. If they cry shortly after a feed, they likely have to burp. And if and when they cry after that, they're tired – it's all a pattern! This isn't always what happens, but more often than not, if you follow the EAT/PLAY/SLEEP routine, it is pretty spot on.



03 What Are Awake Windows?

It's important to watch the clock and make sure you are putting your baby down for a nap before they get overtired - watch for sleepy cues! If you know your baby has just recently had a full feed and a bit of awake time, they may start to show signs of tiredness. Overtiredness presents itself as colicky behavior due to a spike in cortisol. Cortisol is the hormone that is released when our body enters a "fight or flight" response. If a baby passes the point of regular tiredness and is entering into overtiredness, the brain thinks it needs to stay awake, resulting in this physiological response and a spike in cortisol, a stress response that we want to avoid. Paying attention to awake windows (the time between sleep) is the easiest way to do this.

Sleepy Cues

Make sure your baby is fed and has a fresh diaper. As your baby is approaching their maximum awake time, these are signs you should be watching for:



PRE-TIRED

Staring off, not focused
Reddening eyebrows



TIRED

Yawning
Averting stimuli



OVERTIRED

Rigidity
Arching back
Fussiness or crying

Average Awake Window by Age

AGE	TIME AWAKE	TOTAL HOURS OF SLEEP PER DAY
Birth - 6 weeks	45-60 minutes	15-18 hours
6-16 weeks	1-1.5 hours	12-16 hours
4-5 months	2 hours	12-15 hours
6-7 months	2.5 hours	12-15 hours
8-10 months	3 hours	12-14 hours
11-12 months	3.5-4 hours	12-14 hours
13 months - 3 years	4.5-5.5 hours	12-14 hours



04 The 12-Hour Rule

Using the above chart to help you, and the 12-Hour Rule, you can figure out a flexible schedule for your baby's day.

Start by figuring when they woke for the day. For example, let's say 7:00 a.m. You automatically know now that bedtime should be around 7:00 p.m., twelve hours from when they woke up. For fresh newborns (0-6 weeks) bedtime will be later - 9:00-11:00 p.m. is normal - and you should gradually move it earlier as they get a bit older.

So, from 7:00 a.m. until about 7:00 p.m. you are following the EAT/PLAY/SLEEP routine from page 04, using the appropriate awake window from the chart on page 06 per your child's age. Simultaneously, you watch the clock, paying attention to their awake window, and watch for sleepy cues, with the goal of laying your baby down for a nap before they even begin to fuss. You do their nap routine to prepare their body for sleep. Then, as their final awake window approaches the bedtime hour, you do their bedtime routine to prepare their body for that *hopefully* long stretch of sleep that occurs at night.

When your baby wakes at night, you feed them! Newborns need to eat every 2-3 hours, and it's likely that many will continue to feed every few hours at night until their stomachs grow a little bigger. As your baby matures, and if you're practicing independent sleep here and there, they will catch on and night feeds will start to drop on their own. There are strategies for helping your child drop night feeds, but don't consider these until your baby is past 16 weeks of age, is a healthy weight, and you have the go-ahead from their doctor.

Night feeds should be calm and quiet, in very dim lighting. We want your baby to learn that it's all business and then back to sleep! Do your best to keep baby awake through feeds – undressing, tickling toes, and removing the bottle or breast and relatching can help stimulate and keep baby awake to ensure full feedings. When 7:00 a.m. comes around again, the 12 hours of day time starts over!



05 Soothing Your Baby

Sometimes we miss the window. Sometimes babies cry. You won't always know why your baby is crying - it could be that they're tired, bored, hungry, want to be held, in pain, have gas, need to burp, need a diaper change, etc. - while a routine can help you identify or rule out some of the reasons they might be crying, you won't always know. Try to learn your baby's different cries and what they mean...you still won't always know why, and that's okay!

Crying is one of the main ways your baby communicates right now, and it will be for a while. As uncomfortable as it is for us to hear, there are some strategies we can try to help soothe our baby if we've tried to troubleshoot the above list.



The 5 Ss (from Dr. Harvey Karp)

- side/stomach hold
- swaddle
- shushing/white noise
- swinging/rocking/bouncing
- sucking (pacifier or feeding)



06 Give a Minute

We are quick to respond to our baby's every coo, grunt, or cry. This is a good thing, and should be done throughout the day. This will help your baby form a strong attachment to you, knowing you will respond when they call for you. However, after 6 weeks or so, I recommend starting to implement just a little bit of a "wait time" before responding to your baby both at night and during naps. If you immediately rush in upon hearing a peep, you might actually wake a sleeping baby inadvertently! Babies are loud sleepers, and they do wake up frequently between sleep cycles. And, guess what? Sometimes they aren't actually hungry and don't need a feed! Give a minute and see what your baby does. I promise, they will let you know if they really need you! You might be surprised that, if given the opportunity, your baby might put themselves back to sleep.

- 6 weeks = wait 1 minute
- 7 weeks = wait 1.5 minutes
- 8 weeks = wait 2 minutes
- 9 weeks = wait 2.5 minutes
- 10 weeks = wait 3 minutes
- 11 weeks = wait 3.5 minutes
- 12 weeks = wait 4-10 minutes



07 Baby Steps (to Independent Sleep)

Your number one goal for every night should be to lay your baby down awake. At this age, it is okay if they are also drowsy when you lay them down. If they fuss, pick them back up and calm them. Try to lay them down again, awake but drowsy. If they fuss again, try to give a minute to see how they respond. If the fussing turns into crying, calm them again. You can carry them around the room if need be, then lay them down awake again. Repeat this process until they fall asleep. Resist the temptation to let them fall asleep in your arms.

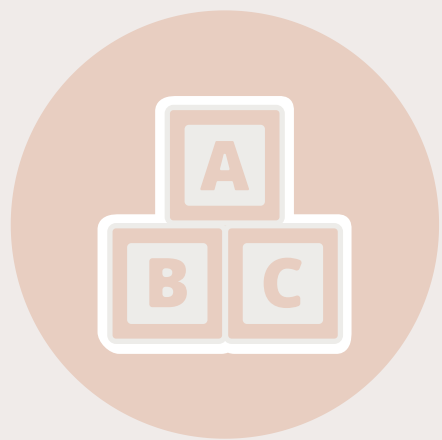
If this continues long enough that another feed is needed, then feed them again doing the best you can to keep them awake, then right back to the crib and keep trying.

When your baby wakes up in the middle of the night, you should wait just a couple of minutes before you respond. If they're hungry, you'll know! If they fuss for longer than a few minutes, you can feed them. However, before you start the feed, delay it by changing the diaper. This is to delay the gratification of the nighttime feeds. Your baby will



then be less likely to connect waking and crying with feeding. Keep an eye on your baby through the feed, and do your best to keep them awake, so they can go back to the crib aware of their surroundings once the feed is finished. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends keeping your baby in your room at night – in their own bassinet or crib – for at least the first six months. Regardless of where your baby sleeps at night, keep the lights low and your voice quiet so they don't become overstimulated. Nighttime is for sleeping, so resist the urge to watch TV or turn on lights. This will also help you resettle faster when you get back to your own bed.

For **naps**, once the nap routine is complete, put your baby in the crib or bassinet awake. If they fuss or squirm, wait a minute or two to see if they can settle themselves. If they get more upset, you can pick them up again and soothe them. At the first signs of drowsiness put them back down again. Repeat this process until they've fallen asleep or one hour has gone by. If they have not fallen asleep within this hour, then get them up and offer a feeding. Do your best to keep them awake through the feed, and then put them in a carrier or car seat clicked into the stroller for a nap. I don't recommend driving your baby around for a nap if you (the parent) are tired just for the sake of getting in a nap. If you do need to drive somewhere, however, note that your baby likely will fall asleep due to the motion of the ride. Just pick up with your day and awake windows again when they wake up.



The ABCs of Safe Sleep

Babies should be placed **ALONE** (nothing else besides a fitted sheet and baby in swaddle or sleep sack), on their **BACK**, in a **CRIB** (or bassinet).



Car seats are not designed for sleeping, so please make sure your baby is only sleeping in the car seat if it is clicked into its base in your vehicle or the stroller at a safe incline. Never leave your baby unattended in the car seat if it is not clicked into the base or stroller. I also do not recommend the use of swings for sleeping - this can be a great awake time and calming activity. I'm a big fan of carrier naps, especially for those naps later in the day. Don't let naps exhaust you - just try for the first few in the crib or bassinet.

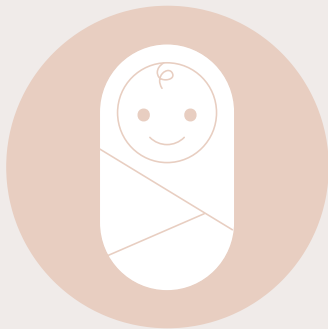
Newborns are flexible. Naps in strollers, car seats (safely!), or your arms are okay for the first few weeks, but keep in mind that the more your baby practices their own sleep skills, the better they will begin to sleep.

If your baby wakes from a nap before an hour is up, try for 10 minutes to coax them back to sleep. You can pat, shhh, or jiggle the mattress, doing whatever you can to encourage them to go back to sleep. It is better to try to preserve the nap so that the feed schedule stays on track, rather than worry about following all the rules for independent sleep habits. If you have tried for 20 minutes with no success, then get them up, wait for 10 to 20 minutes before offering a feeding, and try again at the next nap time. Remember - newborn naps can be exhausting! Focus on committing to independent sleep at bedtime and the first nap of the day.



Pacifiers

Pacifier use can be helpful at the newborn stage. I find it to be a useful tool to help your little one connect sleep cycles and to help lengthen naps. The AAP states a benefit of pacifier use being a protective factor against SIDS. However, it can also easily become a strong sleep association. The pros and cons of pacifier use should be discussed with your partner and then make a decision that will work best for your family's needs.



Swaddles

Swaddling is most effective during your baby's first eight weeks of life. After that, you should leave one of your baby's arms out of the blanket for a week or two and then make the transition to have both arms free. By three months of age, your baby should no longer be swaddled as it is unsafe once baby shows signs of or starts rolling.



Environment

Dark, cool, calm, optimal air-flow, and white noise are key to helping your baby get the best sleep possible. The room should be so dark that you cannot see your hand in front of your face. The best, safest temperature is between 68 and 72 degrees. Babies' hands and feet are often cold to the touch. Your baby is not cold unless their head, neck, or chest is cool to the touch.

Hey! I'm Erin.

I am a wife, mama of two little boys, lover of coffee, shopping, and all things sleep! Mama, I've been where you are, I know how you feel, and I also know how I can help you. If you're looking for a mama friend and sleep bestie, I'm your girl!

For all the tips and tricks about sleep and motherhood, make sure you follow along on Instagram, Facebook, and spend some time on the [blog](#). Also, check out the [Coffee & Catnaps Parenting Podcast](#) where ever you listen to podcasts. You're already off to a good start with sleep - let's keep sleeping! These free resources are gold.



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