



# Easy Steps to Better Sleep: 0 to 6 Month Old Infant

## WHAT IS SLEEP LIKE FOR YOUR CHILD AT THIS STAGE?



Good sleep is essential for every child as sleep has a significant impact on learning and behavioural development. Adequate sleep quantity and good sleep quality contribute to optimal brain function and the overall growth and health of your child. When your child sleeps well, it also reduces the disruptions to your family's sleep.

Establishing good sleeping habits at this stage is vital to meet your child's increasing cognitive demands. Good sleep practices in the early days can have a significant impact on his/her sleep in later months, and form a foundation for his/her sleep in later years.

## SLEEP PATTERNS

- Sleep-wake cycles in the early months are largely driven by hunger. An established sleep pattern usually begins when your child is 4 months old.<sup>1</sup>
- It is normal for breast-fed children to have slightly shorter sleeping periods compared to formula-fed children due to the easier digestibility of breast milk. The benefits of breastfeeding are tremendous and it is recommended that all children be breastfed for up to 6 months for optimal growth and health.<sup>2</sup>
- By the 4th month, your child would have developed some sleep consolidation, which refers to the ability to sleep for a prolonged period during the night hours. Children in this phase would sleep for longer hours in the night and take 2 to 3 daytime naps.
- Your child should sleep for an average of 12 to 15 hours in a day with brief arousals every 50 to 60 minutes.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mindell, J. A., & Owens, J. A. (2015). A Clinical Guide to Pediatric Sleep: Diagnosis and Management of Sleep Problems. Wolters Kluwer Health.

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization. (n.d.). Breastfeeding. [Who.int/health-topics/breastfeeding#tab=tab\\_2](https://www.who.int/health-topics/breastfeeding#tab=tab_2)

<sup>3</sup> Health Hub. (n.d.). Parent Hub: 0-2 Years – Baby Sleep. <https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/183/parent-hub/baby-toddler/baby-sleep>





## GOOD SLEEP HABITS

- Establish a consistent bedtime routine. Make feeding the first activity of the routine to avoid associating feeding with falling asleep. A similar but shorter routine can be applied during naptimes.
- Ensure consistent responses to your child whenever he/she awakens. Put your child to bed when he/she is drowsy but awake to allow your child to learn to self-soothe. Avoid carrying, feeding, or rocking your child to sleep as this would cultivate a sleep-onset association.
- Visit the Health Hub website by scanning the QR code for more tips on good sleeping habits for your child.



## SLEEP CHALLENGES

### 0 to 3 months: Day-night reversal

#### Presentation

Day-night reversal occurs when newborns have frequent wakings during the night and spend more time sleeping during the day.

#### Management

- Increase daytime activity.
- Expose your child to natural light during the day.
- Dim the lights in your child's bedroom at night.
- Reinforce appropriate self-soothing practices by putting your child to bed when he/she is drowsy but awake.



### 4 to 6 months: Night wakings

#### Presentation

Brief arousals every 50 to 60 minutes are expected. Children who have learnt to self-soothe are able to put themselves back to sleep. However, children who are unable to self-soothe would cry out for attention, necessitating caregiver intervention to fall back to sleep.

#### Management

- Implement a sleep schedule with consistent bedtime and daytime naps to ensure sufficient sleep for your child.
- Establish a consistent bedtime routine.
- If needed, allow your child to use the same transitional object (e.g., soft toy) at bedtime and naptime.
- Put your child to bed when he/she is drowsy but awake to allow your child to learn to self-soothe.



## USEFUL TIPS

Temporary sleep disruptions may occur, especially with acute illnesses. Parents should continue with consistent sleep routines and schedules while reinforcing self-soothing practices.

Contact your doctor if your child is persistently difficult to soothe or if you have any concerns with your child's sleep.



### About the National University Centre for Women and Children

National University Centre for Women and Children (NUWoC) is a national university specialist centre that aims to empower women, children and their families to lead healthier lives. We provide comprehensive medical and surgical services ranging from pre-conception to child and maternal health.

NUWoC comprises the Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology (O&G) and Khoo Teck Puat – National University Children's Medical Institute (KTP-NUCMI) of National University Hospital. It focuses on the right-siting of appropriate services in the community and builds complementary services in National University Health System's (NUHS) centres of excellence – Ng Teng Fong General Hospital and Alexandra Hospital.

Through a generous gift from the Estate of Khoo Teck Puat, KTP-NUCMI established an integrated outpatient facility with medical, diagnostic and rehabilitation services for children. We are also the only public specialist centre in Singapore that offers paediatric kidney and liver transplant programmes.

For more information about us, visit [www.nuh.com.sg/NUWoC](http://www.nuh.com.sg/NUWoC)

#### Children's Emergency (24-hr)

Location NUH Main Building, Zone F, Level 1  
Contact +65 6772 5000

#### KTP-NUCMI

Location NUH Main Building, Zone E, Level 2  
(Accessible via Kent Ridge Wing, Zone C, Level 2, Lift Lobby C)  
Operating Hours 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri), 8.30am – 12.30pm (Sat)  
General Enquiry +65 6772 5736  
Appointment Line +65 6908 2222  
Email [ktpnucmi\\_appt@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:ktpnucmi_appt@nuhs.edu.sg)

#### 9a Viva-University Children's Cancer Centre

Location NUH Medical Centre, Zone B, Level 9  
Operating Hours 8am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)  
Appointment Line +65 6772 5030  
Email [cbccappt@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:cbccappt@nuhs.edu.sg)

#### NUH Children's Urgent Care Clinic @ Bukit Panjang

Location Junction 10, #01-22  
Operating Hours 9am – 11pm daily (including public holidays)  
General Enquiry +65 6219 1538  
Email [childreucc@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:childreucc@nuhs.edu.sg)

#### NUH Child Development Unit @ JMC

Location Jurong Medical Centre, Level 2  
Operating Hours 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)  
Appointment Line +65 6665 2530 / 2531  
Email [cdu@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:cdu@nuhs.edu.sg)

#### NUH Child Development Unit @ Keat Hong

Location Keat Hong Community Club, #03-01  
Operating Hours 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)  
Appointment Line +65 6769 4537/4637  
Email [cdu@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:cdu@nuhs.edu.sg)

#### Clinic A22 NUWoC Children's Clinic @ NTFGH

Location Ng Teng Fong General Hospital  
Tower A – NTFGH Clinics, Level 2  
Operating Hours 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)  
Appointment Line +65 6908 2222  
Email [appointment@nuhs.edu.sg](mailto:appointment@nuhs.edu.sg)



## Our Patient Care Institutions

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National University Heart Centre, Singapore  
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