

2005  
BATON ROUGE  
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# The Doctor Is In

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## Is Your Child Sleeping At Night?

Good Sleep habits start early in life. When a newborn, infant, toddler or older child doesn't sleep well at night, it can affect the whole family. It can disrupt the daily activities of the child who is not sleeping as well as the parents who are up and down all night, and potentially other siblings in the home.

As newborns, babies need to learn to put themselves to sleep. Initially, they can sleep in the parent's room in a bassinet or cradle, but by three months, if they wake up during the night, they can learn to sooth themselves back to sleep. Most babies can sleep 6-8 hours between 8 and 12 weeks and at 16 weeks, potentially 8-12 hours. Never put your baby to bed with a bottle.

Routine and consistency are key elements in forming good sleep habits. The child should go to bed and awaken about the same time each day to stay on a good schedule. They should not go to bed with a television on. This can over stimulate the child and cause more of a disruptive sleep pattern. Read to your children every night for about 20 minutes before bedtime and have older children read as part of their nighttime routine. In general, children should not sleep in the bed with their parents. Exceptions are understandable on occasion.

A good reference book for parents experiencing sleep problems is Solve Your Child's Sleep Problems by Richard Ferber, MD. Consult with your Pediatrician if you have concerns with your child's sleep habits.

## The Pediatric Clinic

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