

Sleep Regression: What Parents Need to Know



Why Is This Happening?



Big Milestones

Your baby is hitting major milestones—crawling, pulling up, and babbling—keeping their brain working overtime.



World is Exciting

Your baby has discovered just how exciting the world is and doesn't want to miss a thing, making it harder to settle into sleep.



Separation Anxiety

Babies at this stage become more aware when you leave the room, which can make bedtime more difficult.

What You Might Be Noticing



More Night Wakings

Your baby is waking up more than usual, even if you've been consistent with your bedtime routine.



Sleep Resistance

Resisting sleep or fighting naps more than before—even when clearly tired.



Teething Discomfort

Top front teeth coming in can cause pain and discomfort, leading to more nighttime wake-ups and crankiness.



Temperament Sensitivity

Some babies are more sensitive to changes in routine or environment—even small disruptions can affect their sleep.



Sleep Needs

At this age, babies need around 11–15 hours of sleep per day, including 2 naps.

Tips to Help Your Baby Sleep



White Noise

A white noise machine can provide a soothing distraction from teething pain and help your baby feel more comfortable.



Teething Relief

Offer a frozen washcloth or teething toy for counter-pressure on the gums. Check with your pediatrician before using any OTC medicine.



Sleep Safety

Always place your baby on their back, put them down drowsy but awake, and keep their sleep space firm and free of toys.



Active Daytime Play

Tummy time, walks, talking, and singing help regulate your baby's sleep-wake cycle for better nighttime sleep.



Stay Consistent

Keeping a consistent routine helps avoid confusion and gives your baby the structure they need to settle more easily.

Understanding Wake Windows



Overtired Baby

Awake too long past their sleep window—they become fussy, restless, or overly energetic due to a surge of stress hormones like cortisol.



Under-Tired Baby

Hasn't had enough awake time to feel truly ready for sleep—leads to resistance at naptime, playful restlessness, or short naps.



15-Minute Adjustments

Shift bedtime or naptime earlier by 15 minutes to prevent overtiredness, or later by 15 minutes to give an under-tired baby more awake time.



Nutrition Matters

Talk to your pediatrician about your baby's diet—making sure they're getting the nutrition they need can also support better sleep.



Care for Yourself

Taking time to rest and recharge helps you be more present for your baby. You've got this—you're not alone!

References

- References: American Psychological Association (APA), American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Zero to Three, HealthySteps.