

## How to Tell if Your Newborn is Tired

Your newborn is a unique person and will present you with a very individualized language. However, there are many similarities among babies. The majority of newborns signal tiredness in similar ways.

Let's talk about some common signals to give you a guideline as you begin the process of learning to read your own baby's language. Once you get through the first few months you won't need a list of any kind as you will learn how to read your baby better than anyone else in the whole entire world. But in the meantime, knowing what things to look out for can speed the translation process.



### Elizabeth Pantley, Author The No-Cry Sleep Solution for Newborns

#### Signs that your baby may be tired

- A lull in movement or activity; calm, slower movements
- Quieting down, making fewer or simpler sounds
- Losing interest in people and toys
- Looking away from you
- Appearing glazed or unfocused; staring off in the distance
- Limp, relaxed face and jaw
- Fussing or whining
- Eyes open wide and unblinking or slow, long blinks
- Rubbing eyes, ears or face
- Not settling down in your arms, squirming
- And of course, Yawning!

#### Other factors that can indicate tiredness:

- Being awake for one to three hours
- Last sleep session was disrupted, and your baby woke up before ready

#### Signs that your baby might be overtired

- Fretful crying (which can also indicate hunger)
- Arching backwards or going rigid
- Flailing, jerky, uncoordinated movements of arms and legs
- Chin down, head nodding loosely
- Drooping eyelids, slow blinking, eyelid fluttering
- Dark circles appearing under the eyes; eyes appearing red or bloodshot

#### Other factors that can indicate overtiredness

- Being awake for more than three hours



#### What to do when your newborn is tired

- Get familiar with your baby's unique sleepy signs, and put your baby down to sleep, rock her, or nurse her to sleep -- right away, the moment she seems tired. Your reward will be blissful, easy sleep.

## Newborn Happily Awake Span

How do you help your newborn to be happier, sleep better, and be more peaceful?  
Respect your baby's Happily Awake Span!

The length of time that your baby is awake from one sleep period to the next will have a powerful impact on her temperament and behavior. It will also affect how easily your baby falls asleep and how well she sleeps, so it is a very important consideration.



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#### Newborns shouldn't stay awake very long

- The natural span of awake time is very, very short for a newborn baby and gradually increases over time. Newborns can only stay happily awake for forty-five minutes to an hour or two at the most.

At about three months of age some babies still need a nap every hour or two, but some can be awake as long as three hours, if they are routinely sleeping well at night and getting good, long naps.

By six months most babies can stay awake for two to three hours. However, most newborns – good sleepers and frequent-wakers alike – do best with short awake spans interspersed with plenty of naps.

- I call this the “happily awake span” because your baby CAN stay awake longer, but typically if she does she'll be unhappy – fussing and crying and working herself up so much that it's hard for her to fall asleep, yet hard for her to stay awake. It's an unpleasant situation for babies and their caregivers, too!

#### Long awake times can be detrimental to your newborn

- Studies show that young babies who typically have long stretches of awake time during the day (more than 3 consecutive hours) appear to have more disjointed sleep and shorter sleep stretches. So make sure your newborn isn't staying awake past the time when she demonstrates her unique signals of fatigue.
- If your baby has been awake beyond this “happily awake span” you have likely missed some sleepy signals, and your newborn is overtired. An overtired baby will be fussy and find it hard to sleep, yet won't be able to stay happily awake, either. And the more overtired your baby gets the more he will fuss and cry, to the point of being unable to turn off his frustration long enough to fall asleep, until he eventually wears out. This becomes a pattern that can disrupt sleep, growth and temperament.

#### Short awake periods = Happier baby

If you want your baby to be peaceful, to cry less and sleep better, keep one eye on your baby and one eye the clock. Perhaps even set your phone to buzz as a reminder that sleep time should be near – then watch for those telltale tired signs. Don't let your newborn stay awake for too long at a time and sleep will come peacefully for her at the right times.



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# Your Roadmap to Inspire Peaceful Newborn Sleep

