



**John Scott Health Centre**  
Green Lanes  
London N4 2NU

**020 8809 5577**

Entrance to the Community Centre is on Spring Park Drive -  
then go up to 1st floor

East London and The City **NHS**  
Mental Health NHS Trust



sleepmanagement





**Towards the end of the first year of life**, many babies are beginning to have a good sleep routine. However, a proportion will still be waking regularly and this can lead parents to feel quite exhausted. If this is the case, it is worth thinking about whether you can encourage your child to sleep for longer stretches at night.

....the following tips may be helpful:

## daytime rests

Do not discourage these, some babies need up to three hours' sleep during the day and stopping this does not seem to encourage better night sleeping. However, try to avoid numerous short naps in buggies or car seats, especially in the late afternoon.

## routines

Routines can be very important for babies in helping them anticipate what happens to them during their day. A bedtime settling routine is very helpful. Some parents find that a meal followed by a bath, then a few minutes looking at a book on their lap provides a good winding-down period before bed. But each family has to find ways to suit their own particular style.

## sleep cues

How your baby settles at the start of the night is very important for the management of night waking. Everyone sleeps throughout the night in cycles, beginning with light sleep, going into deeper sleep and back to light sleep again. At the point of light sleep, where we are dreaming, we may wake briefly but settle ourselves again quickly. Therefore if your baby always settles with a dummy or a bottle or rocking s/he will be likely to want this again if s/he wakes during the night. These methods are appropriate for tiny

babies but can become problematic as the baby gets older. For these reasons, it is wise to work towards putting your baby in the cot ready for sleep but awake. They may have a special toy or blanket to settle with, or simply suck their thumb. In this way, babies can learn to settle off to sleep by themselves and are likely to do so again if they wake briefly during the night.

## night time

Once you have put your child down avoid further stimulation during the night. You may need to let your child cry for a while but you could go back at three/four/five minute intervals to reassure him/her. Coming into your bed? This is fine if you don't mind. If you do mind then it is probably better to take your child back to the cot and be firm about where they sleep.

## share the nights

If the baby sees his/her mother at night does s/he associate her with feeding? Could the father help by going to the baby at night thus breaking the association with the breast or bottle? If you are on your own, would a friend or relative help out for a few nights to give you a break and change the pattern?

## keep a diary

Many parents find it helpful to keep a diary of nights recording what time the baby wakes, how long they are awake, how they settle back to sleep and so on. It is sometimes easier to see a pattern of behaviour in this way and look at ways of changing it.

**If you are worried about sleep problems and would like to talk to somebody your Health Visitor may be able to help.**

**If you would like to make an appointment to attend The Sleep Clinic held at John Scott Health Centre on Thursday mornings please telephone Jenny Walters, Clinical Psychologist on 020 8809 5577.**