

# Tinies

The Childcare Experts

## Hiring a Sleep Consultant



## Lack of Sleep

Sleep, or the lack of it, is probably the most widely written about and discussed topic within the entire range of baby care issues. "How do I get my baby to sleep through the night?" is the most commonly asked question and sought after solution amongst all those who are preparing for or have reached parenthood.



It is essential for a baby's cognitive and physical development to get enough rest and without the right amount of sleep your baby may become irritable, fretful, and fractious and be difficult to feed.

During adult sleep restorative functions occur as the mind and body are given the chance to rest. The same applies to babies, but they also actually grow and develop whilst they are asleep and it is during this restful period that the majority of actual brain development takes place. In fact recent research reported in *Nature Neuroscience* indicates that early brain development, learning, and memory are all supported by good sleep nutrition, while sleep disruption has been linked to behavioural and emotional problems as babies grow up.

## Developing Good Sleep Habits

It is vitally important to ensure that from an early age, your baby develops good sleep habits which you can begin to encourage through a regular bedtime routine and a structured sleep pattern during the day.

Very few people realise that babies can actually suffer from sleep deprivation and it is estimated that half of all infants are getting less sleep than they should - usually falling short by at least two hours per 24-hour period.

This comes as no surprise to me as I have encountered first-hand the increasing numbers of parents who are seeking my help to get their babies sleeping through the night. They often contact me at the point of sheer exhaustion and complete desperation after months of little or no sleep, as their babies continually wake throughout the night.

## Parents' Sleep Deprivation

### **Let's not forget the sleep deprivation that you, the parents, are suffering too...**

The amount of sleep an adult needs does vary from person to person and also from one developmental stage to another. According to researchers the average amount of sleep an adult needs each night is around 7.5 to 8 hours of unbroken, good quality sleep. When a new baby arrives, the parents' sleep is inevitably disrupted and it is estimated that they can easily lose about 200 hours of sleep during their child's first year.

Long-term sleep deprivation can have far reaching effects on both our physical, mental and emotional well-being and some of the symptoms are listed below.

- An increase in digestive disorders
- An increase in cardiovascular problems

- Slower reactions and physical reflexes
- Difficulty with sight and problems focusing
- Heightened sensitivity to pain
- Prone to mood swings
- Increased irritability and lack of patience
- Inability to stay alert and vigilant
- Difficulty in controlling emotions
- Loss of concentration and inability to 'think straight'
- Headaches and migraines
- Impaired memory and lack of logical thinking
- Increased risk of suffering from depression and anxiety disorders.



Looking at that list it is a wonder that anyone who suffers from any of the symptoms of sleep deprivation can ever manage to look after themselves, let alone a new baby!

Sleep is a naturally occurring fact of life which nearly all creatures within the animal kingdom need to survive. The rest that it gives is the mainstay of a body's growth and rejuvenation and without it we would not be able to live.

So, if you are experiencing any issues relating to sleep, or the lack of it, then you could well benefit from some expert advice from a specially trained sleep consultant.

### **Alison Scott-Wright, Baby Care Consultant**

Through my work as a baby care consultant many of my clients have given me the title of 'The Magic Sleep Fairy'....of course there is no magic or fairy dust, but just a deep understanding of babies and a wealth of experience in how best to get them to sleep through the night.

Typically, I will go and stay with a family for around 3 to 4 days and work closely with the parents to find the root of the problem and then begin to resolve the issues and initiate some sleep training. The method I have devised is called 'The Reassurance Sleep Training Technique' and is hugely successful. The length of time it takes to resolve the problem does depend on the cause, a baby's age and many other subtle, yet contributing factors. This is then followed up with some telephone support and advice whilst the baby learns to adapt to the new routine that has been put in place.

Alison Scott-Wright is a Baby Care Consultant, Sleep and Reflux Specialist. To book Alison please contact Tinies maternity on [maternity@tinies.com](mailto:maternity@tinies.com) or call **0845 481 1961**.

All information and advice contained in this resource are meant as guidance only.