

Baby's Head Start Guide for Parents

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8 Ways to Help Fussy Baby Sleep Better

During pregnancy, I prepared extensively for delivery day and breastfeeding, while missing out on one topic - sleep. What a major mistake! When Vee (the fussy, gassy, clingy light-sleeper arrived), I became nearly obsessed with ways to help him fall asleep and stay asleep. Sleeping problems that we faced initially:

- He demanded to be carried and rocked or bounced to sleep. Otherwise, he'd cry forcefully.
- It took up to five hours to help him nap.
- When finally asleep, he fussed every 35 to 45 minutes in the day and every 1 to 1.5 hours at night.
- He refused to fall asleep in the car-seat or stroller, so outdoor trips had to be planned meticulously.

This article shares with you some ways that helped him (and I) sleep longer and better.

1. Tummy Massage

Vee has the reputation of the gassiest baby that my confinement helper has seen. He passed gas so frequently that it even shocked him into tears at times. My nurse taught me to do tummy massage for him and it was amazing how much gas he could pass out during each massage. Relieving the gas for him enabled him to sleep more comfortably.

2. Swaddling and Babywearing

Even as a newborn, Vee didn't like to sleep in a cot. His startle reflex which continued for many months also awakened him easily. [Swaddling](#) enabled him to sleep more peacefully, and he self-weaned from it at 6.5 months old. We'd to specially order two large swaddles from the U.S. to wrap up the 9kg dumpling.

On some days, even carrying did not settle him, so I wore him in a [baby sling](#) to calm him down and walked around the house until he fell asleep - a good way to exercise at home.

3. White Noise

This work marvellously and we're using it even today for the 22-month old toddler. When he cried miserably in the early months, turning on the hairdryer for a while would calm him down. Throughout his nap and night-time sleep, rainfall sound would be looped continuously to mask out household noises since he is a very light-sleeper. *(Read reviews about products that produce white noise [here](#).)*

4. Co-Sleeping

Initially, I resisted co-sleeping. When Vee kept fussing after night-time feeds at four months old, I was spending entire nights trying to get him to sleep in his cot instead of resting. Finally, I gave up and let him sleep with us. Co-sleeping (done in a safe way) enabled me to breastfeed him lying down, tend to him easily and he fussed less. It may not work for everyone but certainly worked for us.

5. Eliminating Night-Time Diaper Changes

He's a heavy-wetter and easily pees through conventional disposable diapers. His sensitive skin also cannot tolerate most diapers for more than six hours. After a diaper change, it could take hours to settle him back to sleep again. Eventually, I found modern cloth diapers that are super-absorbent and breathable to last him up to 12 hours without any leak and rash. This was a big step to help us sleep more peacefully. *(Read more about night-time diapering options [here](#).)*

6. Appropriate Clothings and Room Temperature

From about six months old, Vee has been suffering from eczema rashes on his face and inner folds of limbs which flare up when he is warm. Therefore, we experimented with the room temperature and found that a cool environment kept his rashes down and eventually enabled him to sleep soundly.

He's dressed lightly during day naps and for a while, wore a T-Shirt and pants at night. We realised that not every baby needs to wear long sleeves, mittens and socks to bed; do

what is most comfortable for your little one.

7. Sleeping at an Angle

Between four and seven months old, Vee regurgitated milk very often and had slight reflux problems which caused him to scream at night. Letting him sleep on a surface raised at 30-degrees eased the reflux and allowed him to sleep much better.

8. Bedtime Routine and Early Bedtime

Adapting a bedtime routine enabled Vee to tune down more easily for bedtime. At night, he gets a sponge bath, feed, bedtime stories, songs, massage and then encouraged to sleep. For naps, he gets the same routine without the sponge bath. He stays very alert when the surrounding is bright, so his sleeping environment must be dimly-lit. Even the walls near the bed have to be free of posters as he gets totally excited seeing them.

He also fell asleep more easily and slept longer when bedtime was brought forward to about 8.30p.m. It was only when he grew older that his bedtime shifted later and we started enjoying evening outings.

Sometimes, I wonder how many gassy, heavy-wetting light-sleepers with reflux and eczema problems are there. If we can get enough sleep, I am sure you can too. Explore to see what works best for you and your baby.

Related Reviews:

- [Book: The No-Cry Sleep Solution by Elizabeth Pantley](#)
- [Sound Oasis Sleep Bear](#)
- [Kiddopotamus SwaddleMe](#)

Breastfeeding: Top 8 Mistakes to Avoid

On my son's first birthday, we also celebrated the first anniversary of our breastfeeding relationship. Breastfeeding provides numerous benefits - healthy for mother and baby, saves money, saves time, is convenient during travels and more. Despite these, many mothers end up supplementing their newborn babies' diet with formula milk or completely give up breastfeeding in the early days post-partum.

From personal observation, below are the top 8 mistakes that prevent mothers from breastfeeding successfully.

Mistake #1: Not Well-Informed

Are you able to answer these:

- What does the perfect latch-on look like?
- What are a baby's hunger cues?
- How could you to prevent nipple confusion?

If you are clueless about the above, it's time to read up!

During pregnancy, attend a pre-natal class (preferably with your partner) conducted by a qualified lactation consultant. Learn all you can about breastfeeding and practise various breastfeeding positions. Talk to mothers who successfully breastfed and learn from their experiences. You may also join a breastfeeding support group.

Mistake #2: Not Latching On Directly and Pumping Instead

Breastfeeding baby directly provides the best stimulation for milk production, which is especially important in the first 4 to 6 weeks. During this period, it isn't necessary to express the milk to see how much you're producing and determining if it's sufficient. The amount expressed isn't indicative of the amount of milk that your body is able to produce.

My boy is able to suckle until the breasts are empty and if he needs more milk, he would

continue suckling until milk is produced on the spot. The pump has never been able to do that for me.

Mistake #3: Not Feeding on Demand

Feeding on demand is the most important way to ensure that the milk supply is quickly established in the early days. Your newborn baby needs to be breastfed at least 8 to 12 times round the clock. Don't try to schedule her feeds or watch the clock when she is feeding. Simply latch her on once you notice her early hunger cues, and feed her until she's satisfied.

A newborn who isn't crying hysterically finds it easier to learn latching on properly and wait for the let-down reflex. It's also easier to learn cradling her in the correct position.

Mistake #4: Buying a Tin of Formula Milk (Just in case)

Having a tin of formula milk on standby means you're more likely to use it upon facing obstacles or discouragement. People around you are also likely to 'push' you into supplementing when they see that your milk has yet to come in. Or worse, they could feed your baby supplement milk without your consent!

A full-term baby has body reserves to survive without any supplement in the first few days. In my case, my milk came in on day 4 and my boy survived well on colostrum before that.

Mistake #5: Feeding Water

A full-term newborn doesn't need water or any other drink unless medically-necessary. Foremilk (the first part of breastmilk) is thirst-quenching and much more nutritious than water. Water fills your newborn baby's tiny tummy, she suckles at your breasts less and this leads to less stimulation for milk supply.

Mistake #6: Using Artificial Teats

Babies are very smart and know that it's much easier to get milk from a bottle teat than breastfeed directly. Feeding your newborn with expressed breastmilk (EBM) or water using

a bottle teat could lead to nipple confusion and rejection of the real nipple. With less suckling at the breasts, there's less stimulation and less milk supply. If necessary, feed your newborn with a cup, spoon or syringe instead.

Mistake #7: Lack Family, Confinement and Professional Support

Delivery is a tiring process and it's important to have sufficient support to breastfeed successfully. You need a supportive partner who is well-informed about the do's and don'ts of breastfeeding and help you fend off obstacles.

I personally find it important to also have a pro-breastfeeding obstetrician-gynaecologist, confinement helper, paediatrician and deliver in a pro-breastfeeding hospital.

Mistake #8: Lack Confidence and Determination

Without determination, you'd find it hard to continue breastfeeding for long and could waver easily when others doubt your ability to supply enough milk for your baby. My friends and I who have successfully breastfed stuck to the belief that we could produce sufficient milk and were determined to breastfeed our babies successfully, whatever it takes.

In short, focus on breastfeeding your newborn directly on demand (at least 8-12 times a day) round the clock, ignore discouragement, and seek advice from a lactation consultant if you need help. Enjoy the benefits of breastfeeding!

Related Reviews:

- [AVENT Washable Breast Pads](#)
- [Cabbage Leaves - To Relief Engorgement](#)
- [Medela Disposable Baby Cup Feeder](#)

6 Major Benefits of Babywearing



I love this quote from AskDrSears.com "The womb lasts eighteen months. Nine months inside mother, and nine months outside." After spending many hours being carried in a baby sling or carrier, Vee has grown into a happy, observant and sociable boy. This article aims to share with you the benefits that babywearing has given us.

1. Creates a Strong Bond

I often carried my newborn in a baby sling to replicate the womb-like experience that he has been used to for nine months. The close contact with me gave my baby a great sense of security as he could smell, hear and feel me at close proximity. This helped him adjust better to the outside world and enhanced our bond.

As a breastfeeding mother, I was able to respond to Vee's hunger cues quickly and feed him before he started crying (which is a late hunger cue).

2. Calms Baby Down

My boy was bothered by gassiness in the early months and his fussiness peaked at night. Putting him in our sling and walking around in the bedroom was a sure-fire way to calm him down.

My alert baby was also the ultimate nap-resistor after reaching ten weeks old. For his evening nap, I often walked around with him in the sling so that he could take a cosy nap.

Whenever he stirred, I would bounce him a little so that he could settle back to sleep again, taking long naps of up to two hours.

At four months old, Vee suffered from reflux and carrying him in a sling at an inclined or upright angle allowed him to feel more comfortable and not choke on his regurgitated milk.

3. Keeps Mummy's Hands Free

Another great benefit of babywearing is that I could carry on with the daily household routine and keep the baby contented at the same time. It's easy to wash dishes and prepare the ingredients for his meals when carrying him on my back using a sturdy baby carrier. Many second-time mothers also find it convenient to look after an older child while carrying the younger child in a sling.

4. Enhances Baby's Learning

My curious baby enjoys observing my actions as I piggy-back him, and he is able to learn from my daily experiences - organising food in the refrigerator, washing vegetables and fruits, operating the washing machine and so on. This gives him an adult perspective to the world besides playing in his crib or play-yard.

5. Convenient Outdoors

There are places where wearing the baby is much more convenient than manoeuvring a stroller, for instance at a crowded night market (pasar malam), and during grocery shopping when hands are needed to push a trolley. For short trips, it is also easy to simply wear the baby and leave the house, with hands free to carry a diaper bag.

6. Keeps Baby Safe

Wearing my baby in a sling or carrier keeps both of us safer as compared to carrying him with my hands. With both hands free, I could hold on to handrails of staircases or escalators, or hold on to somewhere for support should I lose my balance.

Choosing a Suitable Baby Carrier

There is a huge range of baby slings and carriers that can be mind-boggling to the new mother. Some factors to consider are your build, your child's build and developmental stage, your family's lifestyle, ergonomics and quality of the carrier, and your budget. Oh, and Daddies can look super-cool with a baby carrier too, just see the picture above!

Related Reviews:

- [Beco Baby Carrier \(Butterfly 2 DUO\)](#)
- [Moms in Mind Sarong Sling \(Baby Carrier\)](#)
- [Pupsik Studio Baby Pouch Carrier](#)

9 Reasons to Try Cloth Diapering



My first foray into the world of modern cloth diapers (CDs) began during the second trimester of pregnancy, when I came across a brochure marketing a brand of washable one-size pocket diapers with snaps. I viewed the diapers in the shop and was impressed by the innovation! My husband was convinced almost immediately too.

After searching online for more information, I was overwhelmed by the vast array of options available and soon became hooked to reading up on cloth diapers through the rest of my pregnancy before making my first order. I still remember the excitement when anticipating the parcels containing the beautiful diapers.

After almost 2 years of cloth diapering Vee, here are **the top reasons to love these diapers**:

For Baby

1. Healthy for skin

With cloth diapers, parents can rest assured that no potentially harmful chemicals such as dioxin and fragrances is in touch with baby's sensitive skin. Diaper rash may occur less frequently for babies with sensitive skin. When they occur, breathable cloth diapers allow them to clear up much faster. Since cloth diapers are already paid for, there's no incremental cost to diaper changes, so parents tend to change baby more often (every 1-3 hours). This also helps to keep baby's skin clean and fresh.

2. Comfortable

Modern cloth diapers come with a variety of stay-dry fabrics such as suedecloth and microfleece that wick moisture away from baby's skin. This helps to keep baby dry and comfortable, so that diaper changes may not be needed right after each pee. Fantastic for naps and overnights.

3. Excellent Performance

In the early months, breastfed Vee produced super-explosive poo that could easily overwhelm any new mother. Modern cloth diapers have strong and lasting elastics that hold the poo in very well.

4. Adjustable Absorbency to Last Through The Night

Vee is a super-heavy-wetter who pees through even premium disposable diapers. Fortunately, modern cloth diapers have adjustable absorbency that can last him through the night. At the same time, his night-time cloth diapers are breathable and keep his skin dry and healthy each morning.

5. Attractive

Modern cloth diapers are available in a range of cute designs and prints that are enough to make heads turn. Vee looks so good in cloth diapers that I save quite a sum from buying shorts and pants.

For Mummy & Daddy

6. Economical

There are various cloth diapering options to suit different lifestyles, preferences and budget. In general, 15 one-size pocket diapers with inserts would cost about S\$450 (S\$1 is about US\$0.73), a reasonable stash for a baby until toddlerhood. Moreover, good quality diapers can be passed down to future children for even more savings!

7. Easy Laundry

Washing cloth diapers is actually much easier than what many people think. Depending on personal preferences, they can even be washed with baby's clothes in a single washing machine load. If you stay in a tropical climate, the diapers dry relatively quickly under the sun.

8. Convenient

Using cloth diapers means no more running out of diapers, no need to carry bulky packages of disposable diapers, and no need to store bulky packages in the house. It's absolutely convenient!

For Mother Earth

9. Saves Landfill Space

If baby needs 6 diaper changes a day for 3 years, that means potentially 6,570 disposable diapers added to the landfill! And that's for ONE baby. Imagine how many babies there are... The benefit of using cloth is obvious.

I started with cloth diapering after learning from other mothers who generously shared their experiences. You may also seek out relatives or friends who are using modern cloth diapers on their children. It's amazing how enjoyable and addictive modern cloth diapering can be. Happy diapering!

Related Articles:

- [Revealed: Cloth Diapering Essentials - A Quick Guide](#)
- [How to Prevent Cloth Diapers from Leaking](#)
- [Baby's Laundry & Cloth Diapers: How To Store Them Until Wash Day](#)

How to Introduce Solid Foods to Your Baby

During dinner, your baby suddenly stretches out her hand and tries to grab your spoon. Then she starts to wake up more frequently for milk at night. You start to think, "Is it time to start her on solid foods?"

Wait a minute. Before offering her the first spoon of solid food, take note of the following frequently-asked questions as this article shares what I've learnt and some experiences with Vee.

When to Start Feeding Solid Foods?

The World Health Organization (WHO) and breastfeeding experts worldwide recommend that all babies be exclusively breastfed for the first 6 months of life. This generally means no cereal, juice or any other foods until your baby is about 6 months old. Some signs that your baby is developmentally ready are:

- Loss of tongue-thrust reflex (pushing food out of mouth with her tongue)
- Sitting up without support
- Interested when you are eating
- [How to Get Started on Feeding?](#)

Creating an interest in and a positive attitude towards taking solid foods is very important for your baby's long-term development and health. Offer a small amount of food (about 1 tablespoon) and allow baby to participate by holding the spoon or your little finger. Vee has always been very enthusiastic about self-feeding and eats more when he helps to feed himself. Until today, he loves solid foods and enjoys meal-times.

Offering food also means that baby need not eat or finish the food if she isn't interested. Keep offering food on a daily basis and encourage her to eat.

Get an appropriate highchair or booster seat so that your baby can sit comfortably during

meal-times. Personally, I help Vee to learn what he's having for his meals and minimise distractions (i.e. no toys and no T.V.) for a more pleasant feeding time and to inculcate healthy eating habits.

What Foods to Feed and How to Prepare Them?

To recognise a food that your baby may be allergic to, these are some points worth noting:

- Introduce one new food at a time
- Introduce it in small amounts (about 1 tablespoon and increase it gradually) for at least 3 to 7 days in a row
- Recognise the possible signs of an allergic reaction (e.g. rashes, diarrhoea, gassiness)

I was advised to avoid offering baby the more allergenic foods until he's older. Examples of such foods are: wheat, orange and other citrus foods, dairy, eggs and tomatoes. You should also find out if there is a history of food allergy in your family when planning your baby's menu.

Some common choices for first foods are baby rice cereal, pears, bananas, apples, avocados and sweet potatoes. I prefer organic produce which are free from artificial fertilisers and pesticides, and always wash the produce well before cooking them.

My post-natal nurse taught me to cook all the foods, including fruits (with the exception for avocados), so that baby is able to digest them more easily. In general, I steam the vegetables or fruits (with skin on) for about 20 minutes until they are soft, then remove the skin (if any), and mash them with a fork and through a sieve until they are fine enough for baby to eat. No seasoning such as sugar or salt is needed.

How Much to Feed?

Solid foods are meant to complement and not replace milk feeds before your baby's first birthday. About an hour after her late morning milk feed, and when she's well-rested, you may offer her a suitable first food as lunch.

I chose baby rice cereal as the first food and found it easy to introduce Vee to it by giving him half the usual milk feed and adding expressed breastmilk (EBM) to the cereal, which he accepted very well. A month later, he started taking dinner, and another month later, he began eating breakfast. In between the meals, he continue to have breastmilk.

Observe your baby to decide how much and how frequent to feed her solid foods. When she turns away, stops opening her mouth or fusses, it may be that she has eaten enough.

Related Reviews:

- [Fisher-Price Healthy Care™ Deluxe Booster Seat](#)
- [Kiddopotamus Tiny Diner Placemat](#)

Settling Fussy Baby to Sleep Checklist

- ✓ Tummy massage to relieve gas
- ✓ Swaddle or use an infant baby carrier / sling
- ✓ Switch on white noise
- ✓ Co-sleep (ensure safety)
- ✓ Change wet / soiled diapers, use stay-dry diapers that can last through the night
- ✓ Let baby sleep at an inclined angle (ensure safety)
- ✓ Established bedtime routine, aim for earlier bedtime

Breastfeeding Success Checklist

- ✓ Read up and be well-informed (Perfect the latch on)
- ✓ Latch on directly for the initial days and weeks, until supply is established
- ✓ Feed on demand (at least 8-12 times a day)
- ✓ Believe you can supply enough milk for baby (No need for formula milk as back-up)
- ✓ Breastmilk contains lots of water plus nutrition. Breastfed babies don't need water, unless medically necessary
- ✓ When feeding supplementary or expressed milk, use spoon, syringe or cup to avoid nipple confusion
- ✓ Get as much family, confinement and professional support as possible
- ✓ Have confidence in yourself

More Resources

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Happy parenting and keep in touch!

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