

A Baby Routine

Getting your baby into a routine is one of the first things people will tell you to do as soon as possible. Sometimes this pearl of wisdom comes from people who haven't yet had their own children so you might want to be a bit choosy as to whose advice you take. In my experience, I've found that the best policy is to listen to what everyone has to say but then make your own decision based on the information you get. One thing to bear in mind with advice is that people can only base this on their own experiences. As we all know, every baby is different, even if they are siblings, they can be poles apart. Keep in mind that when you read or hear tips about what a good baby routine is and what a bad baby routine is can have different effects for each child. A classic example is most people will say that one of the last things you should do towards the end of the night is to give them a bath as part of the winding down process. There is a theory that if you give them a long bath then it will tire them out and prepare them for bed. However, in my case, I found that before bath, the baby was starting to get tired but then the bath actually stimulated her and woke her up. It would then take another two or three hours to get her to sleep. In contrast, I have friends who swear by this method and say it works for them every time so it is always worth giving it a go. Sometimes, different products you use at bath time may make a slight difference. For example, a baby bubble bath product which contains lavender may help the baby to feel more relaxed and sleepy. It would seem that the one thing that is consistent about routines is that you mustn't keep changing it too quickly, you should give it time to see if it works or not. You might just need to change one thing or another rather than the whole routine. Try swapping things around like swapping bath time with the last feed time and see if it makes a difference. Also, when you finally find a routine that works for you, it can be very easy to get complacent and fall out of the routine again. You have to make sure you stick with it as best as possible. Another opinion that does seem to be shared by many is that you should have a wind down time for the child before putting them to bed. If you give them too much stimulation before bed such as toys, television or playing then they may find it hard to settle down. Most people will read a quiet story or play some soft music and have some cuddle time. You may also want to turn the lights down or turn some of the lights off so that it looks more like night time. In summer, if it is too bright outside then you may want to consider getting darker / thicker curtains or a blind to help darken the room. If the room is too bright in the morning then they may wake up earlier. This isn't the end of the story though, just when you have your routine working good for you, and you're getting your good nights sleep, you may find that a change in your baby will change the pattern again. A very common cause of this is teething; this may cause them to wake up at regular intervals in the night. It may not be necessarily something wrong with the actual routine so be a bit careful about making any sudden changes. A change that will occur in your baby which may warrant a change in your routine is when your baby starts to become more alert and start having vivid dreams. Again, don't make any sudden changes but if after a while the routine still isn't working, then you may need to look again at changing things around a bit. Most importantly, find a routine which works for you and your baby and don't worry if the routine seems different to what everybody else is doing, if it works then that's all that matters.

About the Author

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