

Growth Spurts

WHAT IS A GROWTH SPURT?

A growth spurt is a time of physical growth where your baby grows in weight, measurement and head size. They can also be connected to the physical development.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF A GROWTH SPURT?

The most obvious sign will be a much hungrier baby.

If you are on demand feeding you will see your baby getting hungry more frequently and if you are on a feeding schedule you will see your baby getting hungry before they are due their next feed. It can be as frequent as every hour, including during the night.

Your baby can also appear fussier during awake times, are more active in the night and sleep more than before. During the day, this is more common in the 3 & 6 month spurts.

You may also notice the physicality of a growth spurt too, such as their baby grows pinching at the toes.

HOW LONG DO THEY LAST?

Growth spurts usually last anywhere between 3-7 days.

HOW CAN I HELP MY BABY THROUGH A GROWTH SPURT?

Be lead by your baby.

If you are on demand feeding then keep offering your baby time to feed when they are showing signs.

If you are on a schedule, for breast fed babies encourage them to feed longer when it is their usual feeding time, but still allow them to feed on demand when showing hunger cues.

For Bottle fed babies you can try increasing the amount you offer by an ounce/30mls at each feed and see if that is enough to help them through until the next one. If you find your baby is guzzling down their feed and still appears hungry when finished you can offer more than 30mls. However sometimes parents find this is harder on their baby's digestive system so if this is the case then you can try smaller and more often feeds instead, creating more of a split feed set up. Then as your baby comes out of the spurt offer larger feeds by gradually increasing as mentioned above.

For both bottle and breast feeding babies you will get a feel for how much your baby is needing and when so do be lead by them as much as possible.

For the sleep part, it's great if your baby is sleepier than normal as it gives you both a chance to catch up on the unsettled nights but still be aware of their sleep cycles and awake periods for their age as too much in the day could have an adverse sleep on the night sleep, in particular do not let your baby 'nap' too late into the day.

OTHER THINGS TO KNOW

Be sure to try and get lots of rest where possible, just put things like housework to the back of your mind as you ride out the next few days. Those of you who are breastfeeding you might feel more thirsty and hungry as your baby takes on the extra calories so get plenty of water and snack are great to have handy.

You may see other people talk about growth spurts around day 2-3 and 7-10 but I find within those first 2 weeks everything is about settling in and adjusting so you will find lots of different things happening. Therefore I don't tend to put too much emphasis on these ones whilst you're trying to find your feet.



Sleep Regressions

WHAT IS A SLEEP REGRESSION?

A sleep regression is a period of disrupted sleep both during the day and night and is caused by developmental change which is aiding in big changes of sleep maturity, physical and mental growth.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF A GROWTH SPURT?

As the name suggests a sleep regression sees a big 180 flip in your little ones sleep behaviour. Prior to the regressions you may have had a baby that slept well during the night and napped like sleep was life in the day. Now in a regression your baby may be cat napping in periods of 30-45 minutes or refusing any form of sleep at all.

In the night you will see constant wakes with usual sleep tools no longer working to get them back to sleep such as feeding or rocking.

As a result you will see a baby who is most likely going to be a lot fussier in their awake times and becoming over tired. One of the ways I like to describe it is that they are completely wired, like they just don't know how to switch off.

HOW LONG DO THEY LAST?

As each of the regressions happen for different reasons how long they last for will differ. Below talks about how to manage each one.

HOW CAN I HELP MY BABY THROUGH A REGRESSION?

Each of the regressions happen for different reasons so I have listed how you can help them at each stage. 4 months- the first of the regressions can feel like woah where has this come from, this regression happens as your baby's sleep maturity changes so to help them out of this they need to be able to self settle. Before this age your baby would be able to drift between cycles whereas now they will wake fully. The main thing will be that they need to go back to sleep after these cycles and you can encourage this with rocking etc but it may not work. You will also most likely find yourself stuck in that cycle in aiding them back to sleep and unsure of knowing when they have come out of the regression.

The 8 month regression I find a lot of parents struggle with this one on the emotional side of things as they may have gotten their baby into a solid routine and are afraid of it totally unravelling as their baby presents similar sleep behaviour to the 4 month. However as this one is more about psychological change it is something that will 'pass' so there are two ways to manage it. Ride it out or try and stick to routine as much as possible knowing it won't necessarily happen. You will see the difference in your baby returning to normal when they come out of it within 1-4 weeks (given they they know how to self settle)

The 12 month regression is another sleep change and it's easily read as a sign that your little one may need to transition from 1-2 naps a day. This may be the case for some babies however as they are going through a big leap at this point they may be fighting sleep and waking up more and earlier to use their new skills.

Another regression that will pass within time and some babies show very few signs of it as it's a less common regression.

OTHER THINGS TO KNOW

They can feel like the newborn days of constant waking and a very tired-some period but just remind yourself it is only temporary and do what you need to get through. Whilst regressions can feel like a step back in the sleep department they are a time of steps moving forward for your little one as they're now at a point they can be quipped with the skills to self settle and move forward developmentally.



Developmental Leaps

WHAT IS A 'LEAP'?

The leaps I am referring to are the 'mental' leaps that your baby goes through. It is a time when they are taking in more of the world around them and working on new skills.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF A LEAP?

Your baby will appear fussy and unsettled, most likely crying a lot more and being clingy. When it comes to sleep you will notice that your baby will stay in their REM sleep more than usual making it hard for them to get into a deep sleep and in turn if you are holding/rocking/feeding to get them to sleep you will most likely struggle to put them down into their crib as they will wake as you do so. With these prolonged periods of REM they are more likely to be cat-napping in the day and wakeful at night. You may also notice that your baby wants to feed more too.

HOW LONG DO THEY LAST?

Each of the developmental leaps are happening for different reasons therefore how long they last for will differ as does the time between each one.

HOW CAN I HELP MY BABY THROUGH A LEAP?

Prepare yourself. You can predict when your baby is going to have these leaps by following the 'wonder weeks' schedule. This is an app that will show when your baby's predicted leaps are based on their due date. From the research that has been conducted into babies neurological development it is scarily accurate, as I have found out from the many baby's I have worked with.

When your baby goes through the different leaps try and 'figure' out your baby's cycles and sleep rhythms as these will change. You can do this by tracking for 3 days, how many minutes after their eyes closed that their bodies relax completely. Then note when it is they begin to move in their sleep (light sleep) and then alas wait as to whether they wake up or go back into that fully relaxed deep sleep. Knowing this you will might be able to help your baby from light to deep sleep by using a sleep aid such as shush and patting or dummy if you use one.

When you notice your baby using their new skills encourage them but be aware that things can become too much for them as they overstimulate, make sure you have downtime/quiet time around your baby's sleep time such as a calm book and soft lighting in their sleep environment.

The first 3 leaps you may not notice the sleep changes as such because their sleep rhythm hasn't matured yet (this happens leap 4 around the time of the first sleep regression) but when you do you can try encourage your baby to go back to sleep both during the day and night. As baby's get older and go through the leaps, during the night if your baby is wide awake it is okay to leave them be if they are just 'hanging out'.

When your baby then seems ready to go back to sleep you can then try and help them,

OTHER THINGS TO KNOW

As developmental leaps present similar signs to that of regressions and for baby's who are not getting enough sleep, it can feel really tough and frustrating to try and work out what might be going on with your baby. Just like the regression remember these are only temporary and are a positive that your baby's development is going in the right direction.

Overview

As with all things in baby land, each baby is individual so the ages set out are of an average however hopefully this table will give you a rough idea of when and why things might be happening, taking out some of the guess work as to why your baby is unsettled.

How you chose to see through these different stages is entirely down to you and your parenting style. Knowing the difference between the physical and mental developmental stages can help however in how you manage them ie teaching your baby how to self settle, giving additional feeds, or giving extra cuddles.

If at any point during your baby's development you feel something else might be at play as to why they are unsettled then please consult a doctor or sleep consultant.

Other food for thought;

If you are unsure why your baby might be cat-napping or having broken sleep outside of these ties then take a look at the following: .

- ~ your baby's sleep environment
- ~ your baby's awake cycles
- ~ how your baby gets to sleep

I do hope this hope this has been useful

Put together for you by



Your Baby's Development Stages ~ that could affect their sleep ~



Growth spurt

Sleep Regression

Mental Leap

AVERAGE AGES OF DEVELOPMENTAL CHANGE

2 weeks

Y

3 weeks

Y

5 weeks

Y

6 weeks

Y

8 weeks

Y

12 weeks
(3 Months)

Y

Y

16 weeks
(4 Months)

Y

19 weeks

Y

26 weeks
(6 Months)

Y

Y

34 weeks
(8 Months)

Y

37 weeks

Y

38 weeks
(9 Months)

Y

46 weeks

Y

52 weeks
(12 Months)

Y