



NEWBORN

Recognizing when your newborn is tired

Learn the subtle signs your newborn gives before they're overtired, plus how to respond so everyone gets more sleep.

A free guide from maternity.app

Newborns don't tell time, but they do have quiet ways of saying 'I'm tired', you just need to know the code.

Look for these sleepy signals before they reach full meltdown.

- ☐ Glazed eyes staring into space (like they're watching invisible stars)
- ☐ Turning away from your face during playtime
- ☐ Subtle yawning (sometimes just an open mouth pause)
- ☐ Fluttering eyelids during feeding
- ☐ Clenched fists pulling toward their chest
- ☐ Jumpy movements that seem jerky instead of smooth
- ☐ Rubbing face against your shoulder like a kitten
- ☐ Pale skin between eyebrows (some babies get a white patch there)

Respond fast when you see these cues.

- **Dim lights.** Half the brightness if you can't make it fully dark.
- **Sway or bounce.** Slow, steady motion mimics what they knew before birth.
- **Use white noise.** A fan or app works better than perfect silence.
- **Skip eye contact.** Looking away helps their nervous system calm down.

When tired turns to overtired.

If you've missed early cues, they might cry with tight-closed eyes or arch their back. This means skip the usual wind-down routine, go straight to a dark room with strong movement (like car rides or babywearing) to help them reset.

NAP MATH

Most newborns can only stay happily awake for 45-90 minutes at a time. Start watching for cues at 40 minutes.

You'll start recognizing their personal 'I'm sleepy' language within days. Trust that you're learning together.