

# Overcoming Setbacks Due to Illness

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Having a sick child is a tough situation that every parent is going to face at some point. There are a few things that you need to keep in mind when they become sick.

The first is that your baby will probably wake up during the night. Anyone who is ill does not sleep as well as they normally do. We tend to have two, five, or even more night time wake-ups, so it's realistic to expect that your sick child is going to have some night wake-ups as well.

How you handle those wake-ups will make a big difference in how they sleep going forward. One of the big mistakes people make is that they start to intervene in their child's sleep. By this I mean that they go try to rock or feed the baby again. They try to lull their child to sleep in their arms or revert back to their old sleep props.

I understand why people do that, because you want to comfort them when they are sick. I'm not saying don't comfort them. You can absolutely go in and have a short cuddle, wipe their nose, give them a drink of water, or whatever you need to do to offer some comfort, but you don't want to interfere with their sleep process.



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PARENT AND SLEEP COACHING

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Three is kind of my rule of thumb. If anything happens for more than three nights, there is the risk that the baby is going to expect this now and start waking up looking for feeds, even once the sickness is gone. Another big mistake people make is that they bring their baby into bed with them. Again, I understand it. I understand where that desire comes from, but that's not a safe sleep choice.

If you're really concerned about your child during the night, it is much better for you to go to them than to bring them to you. I'd suggest throwing down an air mattress for a night or two so you can be in the room to keep an eye on them. Again, remembering my rule of threes, try not to do it for any longer than three nights or you might find yourself six months later still sleeping beside their bed.

Sometimes set-backs happen. As soon as your baby is well again, you should get right back on track with your normal routine. You know that they can do it because you've laid the groundwork for healthy sleep habits. It's just a matter of proving to them that they need to use their own soothing skills once again.

## A Few Helpful Ideas to Manage a Cold:

Steam from a humidifier in their bedroom

Diffuse some oils like lavender & eucalyptus in the air

A warm Epsom-salt bath or oatmeal bath

A cold compress on their head

Lots of saline drops to break up that mucus

SLEEP - let them get lots of it, even at off times if their body is telling them they need it