



Sleep Regressions: 4 Month Regression

Let's first talk about the famous 4-month sleep regression. This is an ugly one! The root cause of this regression is the permanent changes happening to your baby's sleep patterns. By the 4-month mark, your baby's sleep cycles are actually maturing and becoming more adult-like! Newborn babies are constantly in REM sleep, and the state of their sleep doesn't change. This is why they can sleep anywhere, anytime and you don't need to worry about anything external waking them up. A newborn baby will wake up from his sleep for one of three reasons: 1) hunger; 2) discomfort, either from a wet or dirty diaper, being too hot or cold, etc.; or 3) because he's done sleeping.

By the time the 4-month regression hits, you can add a 4th reason to that list: he doesn't know how to put himself BACK to sleep. See, at 4 months, your baby's sleep patterns become more adult-like, where he now cycles in and out of deep and light sleep. Refer to the sleep science module for more details on what this looks like. If your baby needs help falling asleep, reaching this milestone means that your baby might often need help falling BACK asleep at the end of a 45-minute sleep cycle. That's what's likely causing all those night wakings that seem to have come out of nowhere!

So now what?

1. Firstly, do not wait it out. Unlike other regressions, **these changes are permanent**, so unless you intervene and make changes yourself, you likely won't see any improvements anytime soon.
2. Second, make sure that the sleep environment for your baby is optimal for good quality sleep. Blackout blinds, a white noise machine and a cool and comfortable temperature are an absolute must because your baby is older and more aware of her environment and surroundings. A white noise machine is especially essential because you don't want background noise waking her up unnecessarily.
3. Thirdly, ensure that your baby is napping frequently during the daytime and that he isn't awake for longer than 1.5-2 hours. Overtiredness is a sleep killer and can cause unnecessary night wakings, so make sure that you're putting your baby down for a nap or bedtime **JUST** as he's beginning to get tired.
4. Fourth, feed your baby lots during the daytime. If you are nursing, make sure you are feeding your baby on demand, every 2-2.5 hours so that daytime nutrition is optimal.
5. Fifth, do not wean her from all of her nighttime feeds. This regression happens to coincide with a growth spurt which means most babies this age aren't ready to go 11-12 hours straight without eating. Most still need to eat once or twice, so make sure to keep these feeds in for now. Don't worry though- a growth spurt at this age doesn't mean they need to be eating every 2-3 hours at night!
6. And last but not least, teach your baby how to fall asleep independently. Remember, the whole reason why your baby is waking so frequently is because he doesn't know how to put himself to sleep by himself. Sleep training will address this problem by teaching him how to fall asleep on his own and how to fall **BACK** to sleep on his own. At this age, I wouldn't be so quick to tackle naps because daytime sleep isn't always organized by 4 months. Focus on teaching him

to fall asleep independently, and fall back to sleep independently at night first. Of course, for a detailed guide on how to do this, see the sleep training module.