

## Swaddling Your Baby

By Michelle Higgins

Your baby was safely sheltered in the cozy cocoon of your womb for nine months before being transported into the big bad world. No wonder swaddling her makes her feel 'at home'.

What is swaddling?

Swaddling is snugly wrapping your baby in a blanket to make her feel safe and secure. Parents of colicky babies swear by swaddling. It also helps some babies to sleep more soundly.

The art of swaddling

Follow these simple steps to become a swaddling expert in no time. Spread a blanket on a flat surface and fold down a corner a few inches. Place baby diagonally on her back so that her head rests just above the fold. Pull one corner of the blanket across her body to tuck it under her back. Then hold the other corner and wrap your baby snugly, while tucking it in the rest of the blanket. Lastly, pull the lower corner up to tuck it under baby's chin to complete a secure swaddle.

Special swaddling blankets make this process simpler. Take care not to leave any folds or lumps on the underside that may cause discomfort to baby.

If your baby is more comfortable with her hands free, you can wrap below her arms so that she retains some mobility.

How does swaddling help my baby?

Swaddling is thought to simulate the warmth and coziness of the womb to make your baby feel safe and secure. It provides the extra warmth that your baby might need, until his body temperature control mechanism starts functioning well. Swaddled babies sleep well and are not awakened by their own startle reflex. A bundled baby is easier to carry as a compact package even while he is sleeping.

Most importantly swaddling can calm your fussy or colicky baby and can help him fall asleep.

Before you start swaddling...

Take care not to cover your baby's face, since that could suffocate her. Be sure the swaddle is snug but not too tight to squeeze her limbs and cut off circulation; leave some room for her to flex his legs.

Avoid swaddling in warm weather, to prevent overheating, a risk factor for SIDS.

Once you perfect the art of swaddling, your baby may soon look forward to be cuddled up in a swaddle.

Once your baby starts getting active, it is time to stop swaddling her. You get your cue when she starts kicking the swaddling blanket away. Some babies might enjoy being wrapped up for a much longer time.

There is no specific age limit for swaddling but 4-5 months seems to be the consensus. Beyond that age, babies usually kick off their blankets, which can then turn into suffocation hazards.

Some babies may never like to be swaddled though! Abandon the practice after a few trials if baby continues to be restless when swaddled.

## About the Author

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