

# Trained Night Feeders from Feeding Until Asleep

Disease or Condition

## Definition

## *What Is My Child's Main Problem?*

- A trained night feeder is a baby who:
- Is over 4 months old and can't sleep through the night (at least 7 straight hours)
- Wakes up and cries one or more times a night to be fed
- Can only return to sleep if you hold and feed him

## Health Information

## *What Else Do I Need To Know?*

### **Cause of a Trained Night Feeder**

- The main cause is being breast-fed or bottle-fed until asleep at bedtime and for naps.
- If the last memory before sleep is sucking the breast or bottle, the child does not learn to comfort himself and fall asleep without the breast or bottle.
- Therefore, when the baby normally wakes up at night, even though he's not hungry, he is not able to go back to sleep without feeding as a pacifier.
- Age limits how long a baby can fast. As babies become older, they can normally sleep longer without a feed.
- By 4 months of age, most bottle-fed babies can sleep more than 7 hours without a feeding.
- By 5 or 6 months, most breast-fed babies can sleep 7 hours at night without a feeding.
- Normal children of this age do not need calories during the night to stay healthy.

## Treatment and Care Advice

## *What Do I Need to Do?*

1. **Separate Feeding from Falling Asleep:**
  - Feed your baby as the first step in the bedtime ritual, rather than the last step.
  - Also, feed him in a different room with the lights on.
  - Your baby's last waking memory needs to be of the crib and mattress, not of the breast or bottle.
  - Feed, play, sleep is an even better sequence.
2. **Put Your Baby in the Crib Drowsy but Awake:**
  - At naptime and bedtime, place your baby in the crib drowsy but awake.
  - This is when you need to re-train your child to be a good sleeper.
  - Start with a pleasant bedtime ritual. But when your baby starts to look drowsy, place him in the crib.
  - Your child's last waking memory needs to be of the crib and mattress, not of you.
  - If your baby is very fussy, rock him until he settles down or is calm, but stop before he's fully asleep.
  - He needs to learn to put himself to sleep. Your baby needs to develop this self-comforting skill so he can put himself back to sleep when he normally wakes up at night.