3am cheat sheet

Baby awake at night?

Anything seem wrong? Get help first.

Call 911 or your local emergency number if your baby can’t breathe, turns blue, won’t wake, loses consciousness or has a seizure, or if you believe your baby is in danger.

For anything below, call your pediatrician now, day or night.

- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher in a baby under 3 months
- Fast or hard breathing, grunting, or skin that stays blue
- Rarely alert, not waking for feeds, or too tired to eat
- Fewer than 6 wet diapers a day, a dry mouth, or a sunken soft spot
- Forceful vomiting after feeds, or blood in vomit or spit-up
- Crying that won't stop or sounds like pain
- You feel something is wrong. Trust that and call.

Nothing wrong? Try these.

If you see hunger cues, it's fine to feed now.

Under 4 weeks	Counted from the due date, or with feeding concerns. Feed on demand, whenever you see hunger cues. Don’t wait. Follow any plan from your pediatrician.
Hungry?	Hands to mouth, turning to breast or bottle, licking lips. Feed in low light, then burp.
Wet or dirty?	Change the diaper in low light. Otherwise, leave it.
Just fed, squirming?	Burp again. Hold upright and walk a little.
Just fussing?	Hold, rock or sway. From 4 months, you can wait a few minutes first.
Crying hard?	Take their temperature. Check diaper, clothing, and for a hair around a finger or toe.
Overwhelmed?	Baby on their back in a clear crib. Leave the room for 10 to 15 minutes. Call someone. Never shake a baby.

Back down on their back, in the crib or bassinet, with nothing loose.

Very sleepy? Don’t feed on a couch or armchair. Fed in your bed? Put your baby back in their own space before you sleep.

General guidance, not medical advice. Always consult your pediatrician about your baby.

Sources: AAP (when to call, emergencies, safe sleep, crying, getting babies to sleep), CDC (hunger signs), NHS (night-time care). Sources checked: 2026-11.