

Safe Sleeping Practices

You can reduce your baby's risk of dying while sleeping by being aware and following safe sleeping practices, and by making sure those who care for your baby use these guidelines too.

The Safest Way for Your Baby to Sleep is Alone, on His or Her Back, in a Crib or Bassinet.

Babies have died because they were trapped between the cushions of a couch, or their faces were pressed against soft bedding or pillows and they simply could not breathe. Other babies were sleeping in an adult bed and were accidentally laid on by a sleeping adult, older child or large pets. Don't let these things happen to your baby! The safest place for your baby to sleep is alone, on his/her back, in a crib or bassinet.



- **Do** put your baby to sleep alone.
- **Do** put babies to sleep on their backs during naps and at nighttime. Because babies sleeping on their sides are more likely to accidentally roll onto their stomachs, the side position is not as safe.
- **Do** use a safety-approved crib or bassinet with a firm mattress and a well-fitted sheet.
- The crib or bassinet should be free from toys, soft bedding, blankets or pillows.
- If you must use a blanket, put your baby's feet at the end of the crib. The blanket should reach no higher than the baby's chest. Tuck the ends of the blanket under the crib mattress to make sure it is safe.

It is Easy to Make Safe Sleep Practices a Part of Everyday Life.

By following all safe sleeping practices, you will know that you are doing all you can to keep your baby safe.

- **Do not** let your baby sleep with an adult, older child or large pets.
- **Do not** put toys and other soft bedding, including pillows, blankets, comforters, bumper pads, and stuffed animals in the crib or bassinet with your baby. These things can hurt your baby's ability to breathe if they accidentally cover the baby's face.

What are unsafe sleeping practices?

Unsafe sleeping practices are when adults, older children or large pets share a bed or sleep with an infant. Unsafe sleeping practices also include putting an infant to sleep on an adult bed, couch, sofa bed, or a soft surface. It is also unsafe to put an infant to sleep with pillows, blankets or other soft items.

- **Do not** cover the baby's head with a blanket. If a blanket is needed, there should be just one and it should be placed below the chest and tucked under the mattress.
- **Do not** put your baby to sleep on adult beds, chairs, sofas, waterbeds, cushions, or nursing pillows.
- **Do not** over-bundle your baby in clothing and blankets.
- **Do not** let your baby get too hot. Your baby may be too hot if you notice sweating, damp hair, flushed cheeks, heat rash or rapid breathing. Remember to dress your baby lightly and set the room temperature to a range that is comfortable for lightly clothed adults.
- **Do not** place cribs close to windows where cords are dangling to avoid risk of strangulation
- If your baby falls asleep in a shoulder sling, baby carrier, stroller, or car seat, **as soon as you can** put your baby to sleep alone, on his or her back, in a crib or bassinet.

Tummy for Play and the Back for Sleep

Talk with your pediatrician about making tummy time a part of your baby's activities. Your baby needs tummy time when awake and when someone is watching them. Tummy time helps build strong neck and shoulder muscles. But remember, when putting your baby to sleep at nighttime or for a nap, place the baby to sleep on their back. This is the safest way for your baby to sleep.

Make Sure Others Know How to Keep Your Baby Safe

When someone else takes care of your baby like a family member, friend or child care provider, make sure that you talk with them about safe sleeping practices. Bring this fact sheet along and let the person watching your baby know how important it is to follow guidelines.

Before leaving your baby with anyone, be sure that the person agrees with these safe sleeping practices.

Do not put your baby at risk! Infant deaths due to unsafe sleeping practices can be prevented. To keep your baby safe, follow the guidelines on this fact sheet.

In our community, these awful and frightening things have happened:

- 1 baby died in an extremely hot room (greater than 96° F).
- 20 babies died when sleeping with parents (in only 3 of these cases were the parents under the influence of alcohol, drugs or medicines).
- 2 babies died sleeping in their bassinets. Accidental suffocation was the likely cause of death because these babies were placed on their stomach or side with too much soft bedding & blankets in the bassinet.



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