

SAFE INFANT SLEEP



The American Academy of Pediatrics has guidelines to reduce the risk of death from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and other known sleep-related causes. SIDS deaths have declined more than 50 percent since the Back to Sleep campaign began in 1992, but it remains the leading cause of death for children 1-12 months.

What makes a safe sleep space for my infant?

- A firm sleep surface (such as a mattress covered with a fitted crib sheet) in a safety-approved crib or portable crib. It is recommended your infant sleep in your room close to your bed on a separate sleeping area (NOT in your bed). Ideally, you should do this for the first year of life, or a minimum of the first 6 months.
- Place your infant on his or her back for naps and at bedtime.
- Do not use crib bumper pads, pillows or blankets in your infant's sleep area.
- Avoid commercial devices marketed to reduce the risk of SIDS, including wedges, positioners and special sleep surfaces, as there is no evidence they are safe or reduce the risk of SIDS.
- Do not put toys and stuffed animals in your infant's crib.
- Make sure nothing covers your infant's head.
- Dress your infant in sleep clothing, such as a one-piece sleeper.
- Do not use a loose blanket to cover your infant. You do not want him to get too hot.
- Do not let your infant sleep in an adult bed, on a couch or on a chair.
- Do not sleep with your infant. Do not let anyone else sleep with your infant.

What other ways can I reduce the risk of infant death?

- Get regular health care during pregnancy.
- Do not smoke, use illicit drugs or drink alcohol during pregnancy or after the infant is born.
- Do not allow anyone to smoke around your infant.
- If possible, breastfeed your infant for the first year of life.
- Consider offering a pacifier at naptime and bedtime. Do not hang pacifiers around the infant's neck or attach them to clothing.
- Wait to give a pacifier to your infant until he is nursing well if you are breastfeeding. This is usually around 3-4 weeks old.
- Do not use teething necklaces.
- Do not use heart or breathing monitors to reduce the risk of SIDS. There is no evidence they decrease SIDS.
- Immunize your infant on time. Talk with your infant's doctor about the immunization schedule.
- It is important for your infant to spend time on his or her tummy when awake and supervised to help strengthen the neck and shoulder muscles. It will also help prevent a flat spot on the back of his or her head.



How can I prevent a flat spot on my infant's head?

- Infants should never use the car seat for sleeping purposes outside of the car. Car seats should only be used for travel - not sleeping, feeding, or any other use outside the vehicle. If your baby falls asleep in a car seat, stroller, swing, infant carrier, or sling, you should move him or her to a firm sleep surface on his or her back as soon as possible.
- Change your infant's position in the crib from time to time. Remember to keep your infant on his or her back.

How can I teach others about safe sleep?

- Share this information with anyone who will be caring for your infant. This includes babysitters, day care providers, friends and family members.
- Be sure your infant sleeps on his or her back at all times. We now know this is the safest way for an infant to sleep.

For more information:

Visit childrensmercy.org or call (816) 234-1607.



Scan here to watch a video on safe infant sleep.

One of the most important decisions you will make as a parent is where and how you place your infant to sleep.



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