



# Safe Sleep Guidelines for Baby

These Safe Sleep guidelines, supported by the American Academy of Pediatrics, will help reduce the risk of Sudden Unexpected Infant Death. Between 2009 and 2013, 22 infants died in an unsafe sleep environment in Dane County, Wisconsin.

We encourage you to review these Safe Sleep guidelines and also share them with others who may be caring for your baby, such as grandparents, other relatives, babysitters and friends. Please feel free to ask your health care provider if you have any questions.

## KEEPING BABY SAFE WHILE PREGNANT

Exposing yourself to smoke while you are pregnant and after the baby is born can be dangerous for both you and baby. Smoke exposure has been linked to increasing a baby's risk for SIDS. Alcohol and drug use can also increase your baby's risk for SIDS. If you are interested in quitting smoking or getting help with substance abuse, please talk to your health care provider.

Be sure to visit a health care provider for regular prenatal checkups to reduce your risk of having a low birth weight or premature baby. Your provider can also help you maintain a healthy pregnancy and offer tips on healthy eating and keeping active.

## HEALTHY NEWBORN SLEEP PATTERN

A healthy baby is one that wakes often to eat. Every time your baby is awake allows for healthy brain development. As your baby grows, he or she will have longer sleep periods. Just like everything else, sleeping is new for your baby and learning how to sleep will take some time.



## HOW CAN I HELP MY BABY LEARN TO SLEEP?

It is important to set up a routine with your baby that prepares him or her for sleep. This might include lowering the lights, reading a story, or giving baby a soothing bath. Using white noise, such as a fan running in the room, is also encouraged.

## WHERE IS THE SAFEST PLACE FOR MY BABY TO SLEEP?

The safest place for your baby to sleep is in his or her own crib, bassinet, portable crib or pack-and-play. It is recommended to room share, which means placing the baby's crib or bassinet within arm's reach of the parent. This arrangement has been shown to decrease the risk of SIDS by as much as 50 percent. Room sharing without bed sharing allows you to bond and monitor your baby easily and helps with feeding and comforting your baby.

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If you are buying a crib, it is important to know all new cribs on the market today meet the safety standards of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association (JPMA). Before getting a used crib, check to see if it has been recalled at [www.recalls.gov](http://www.recalls.gov) or [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).

If you have a used crib, please make sure it is in good condition.

- No missing parts or broken pieces.
- The corner posts should not stick up more than 1/16th of an inch as this can pose a strangulation hazard.
- If the sides drop, do not use the crib.
- If you can fit a soda can between the slats of a crib, do not use the crib, as this means an infant's head could get caught between the slats.

### WHAT SHOULD MY BABY'S SLEEP ENVIRONMENT LOOK LIKE?

Your baby should be placed on his or her back in his or her own bed, on a firm mattress with a tight-fitting sheet. Keep this environment free of blankets, pillows, toys, or other items that did not come with your crib, as they can pose a suffocation hazard to your baby. This also means no crib bumpers, including the mesh material, which may also be dangerous.

### IS IT EVER SAFE TO HAVE AN INFANT ON HIS OR HER STOMACH?

This time awake is called tummy time and is very important for your growing infant. Talk to your child's care provider about making tummy time a part of your baby's daily activities. Your baby needs plenty of tummy time while supervised and awake to help build strong neck and shoulder muscles.

### TALK ABOUT SAFE SLEEP PRACTICES

When leaving your baby in someone else's care (a child care provider, family member or friend), it is important to talk with this person about the safe sleep practices described on this flier. Every caregiver needs to practice safe sleep when caring for your baby.

### WAYS TO REDUCE MY BABY'S RISK

- Always place baby to sleep on his or her back during naps and at night.
- Keep the environment free of suffocation risks: no pillows, blankets, toys, bumpers etc.
- Breastfeeding is recommended and strongly encouraged. Once breastfeeding is established, consider using a pacifier at nap and bedtime. The pacifier should not have cords or clips, which can pose a strangulation risk.
- Avoid smoking or smoke exposure for your baby.
- Keep the room temperature comfortable and avoid overheating your baby.

Sources:

*American Academy of Pediatrics (2011): AAP Expands Guidelines for Infant Sleep Safety and SIDS Risk Reduction. Retrieved from [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org).*

*National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2013): Safe to Sleep. Retrieved from [nichd.nih.gov](http://nichd.nih.gov)*

