



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Won't my baby choke if I place him on his back to sleep?

No, Healthy babies tend to swallow or cough up fluids when they are lying on their backs. They also have other ways such as a gag reflex to prevent choking while lying on their backs. If your baby has a medical condition, you should talk to your pediatrician about the best sleep position.

Q: What things can I do to reduce my baby's risk of sudden unexpected infant death?

Place your baby alone, on his or her back in a crib. Breast feeding your baby can help reduce the risk, and not smoking in your home and around your baby will help too.

Q: Do immunizations cause SIDS or the unexpected death of an infant?

No, there is no evidence that immunizations cause SIDS or the unexpected death of an infant.

Q: Will it take time for a baby to learn to sleep soundly on his or her back?

Yes, sleeping soundly on the back is something babies learn and parents shouldn't give up. If your baby wakes during the night, remember that this lighter sleep is natural and protects baby against unexpected death.

Q: My baby has trouble falling asleep on his/her back; are there things I can do to help?

Yes, there are some things that help parents get their babies to sleep. It is important to establish a night time routine, this lets your baby know it's time for bed. This may be reading a book, turning the lights down or giving baby a bath. Swaddling is helpful for some babies, as well as white noise (fan or soft, soothing music).

Q: Will putting my baby on his or her back lead to a flat head?

No, however if your baby is always left on his or her back it could lead to a flattening of the head. To help prevent this, place your baby on his or her tummy 2-3 times a day, but ONLY when the baby is awake and you can watch closely.



Q: Can smoking anywhere near baby increase the risk of sudden unexpected infant death?

Yes, smoke from any type of cigar or cigarette contains many ingredients that are harmful to adults and young children. Exposing a baby to secondhand smoke makes him or her 2.5 times more likely to die unexpectedly.

Q: If the cause of unexpected infant death is unknown, how do you know that what you're telling me is true?

While sometimes the exact cause of unexpected infant death is unknown, over time we have learned that there are some common things that were present when a baby died. For example, when doctors started recommending that babies be put on their backs to sleep, unexpected infant deaths went down in the US. It is up to you as the parent to make decisions for your baby to keep him or her safe.

KOHL'S
Sleep Safe Program



Q: What if I slept with my other babies in the bed with me and they turned out fine?

Our recommendations come from doctors, scientists and other experts. You are the parent, and it is up to you to make sure your baby is safe and healthy. Just because your other babies were ok doesn't mean this is a safe choice.

Q: Why are more black babies dying than other babies?

The fact that black babies are dying more than other babies is a tragedy and many people are working to change this. Studies show that African American parents and caregivers are more likely to place babies on their stomach or side to sleep and we know this increases the risk of infant suffocation. If parents or caregivers always place baby on his or her back to sleep, and then a different caregiver puts baby on his or her tummy to sleep, that baby has a bigger risk of SUIDS – in fact, the chance of that baby dying of SUIDS is 19 times greater in that situation. It is important that you share the information about safe sleep with grandparents, and other caregivers. You are helping to keep your baby safe by sharing this information.

Q: What if my baby rolls over on his/her own and ends up sleeping on his/her tummy because of that?

Once your baby is able to roll over completely, from back to tummy and then tummy to back again, the chances of him or her dying are greatly reduced. Generally your child will be around 7 or 8 months old when this happens, although every child develops at his or her own pace. When your baby is first learning to roll and he or she can only go from back to stomach, you may want to turn him or her back onto the back to sleep. If you follow the recommendation of having your baby sleep in the same room with you, on a separate sleep surface, this is easy to do.

Q: What if I want to breastfeed and it's easier to have the baby in the bed with me?

You can breastfeed your baby in bed, but when it is time for your baby to go to sleep, it is recommended that you put your baby in his or her own sleep area. Having a crib, pack n play or bassinette next to your bed makes this easy.

Q: What about putting my baby on his or her side to sleep?

It is dangerous to lay your baby on his or her side to sleep because this position is unstable, and it's easy for your baby to roll over onto his or her tummy.

Sources:

American Academy of Pediatrics (2011) AAP Expands Guidelines for Infant Sleep Safety and SIDS Risk Reduction. Retrieved from healthychildren.org

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2013) Safe to Sleep. Retrieved from nichd.nih.gov

