



*Make
Your Baby's*

Safe Sleep Plan



Healthy Living Program
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Informed by the American Academy of Pediatrics Updated 2022 Recommendations for Reducing Infant Deaths in the Sleep Environment.

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*Photos courtesy: cribsforkids.org (pages 6, 7 & 15)
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All of us want our babies to be safe.

A safe sleep plan is an essential part of lowering your baby's risk of sudden unexpected infant death (SUID), including sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).





Before their first birthday, too many babies die suddenly and unexpectedly during sleep or in their sleeping environment.

These deaths are cases of sudden unexpected infant death, which is also called SUID. SUID includes deaths caused by SIDS, accidental suffocation and strangulation in bed, and causes that are unknown or not well understood.

Creating and following a safe sleep plan is the most important thing you can do to reduce your baby's risk of SUID.

A safe sleep plan describes how a baby will sleep and includes strategies to reduce the baby's risk of SUID.

Your baby's safe sleep plan should include:

The usual plan for how your baby will sleep, including:

- Where your baby will sleep.
- What surface your baby will be on when sleeping.
- What your baby's sleep environment will be like.
- What your baby will be wearing during sleep.
- What position your baby will be in when laid to sleep.



How your baby might sleep and what you will do in unexpected situations, like:

- When visiting friends or family.
- When traveling.
- When you find your baby asleep in a way that is different than your usual plan.



Your usual plan for feeding or comforting your baby at night, including:

- Who will feed or comfort your baby at night.
- How they will feed or comfort your baby.
- What they will do when your baby is done being fed or comforted.

Your baby's safe sleep plan might also include other plans for reducing your baby's risk of SUID.

The safest way for baby to sleep is...



In the same room as you, but not the same bed as you



On a firm, flat, and level surface

(crib, bassinet, pack-and-play, or cradleboard)



With no pillows, blankets, toys, or other soft objects



Wearing pajamas and/or a nonweighted sleep sack



On their back at naps and at nighttime





Other ways to reduce SUID risk:



A smoke and vape-free family and environment decrease your baby's risk of SUID.

*Thinking about quitting to provide your baby a smoke and vape-free space? Call 800.784.8669, text **READY** to 200-400, or visit quitline.com for free support.*

If you and your baby are able to, you can also decrease your baby's risk of SUID by breastfeeding.

Having a hard time or have questions about breastfeeding? Ask your healthcare provider if a lactation consultant is available.



Offering your baby a pacifier at naps and nighttime reduces SUID risk.

- If your baby is exclusively breastfed, consider waiting to offer a pacifier until breastfeeding is working well for you and your baby.
- If your baby is bottle-fed with breastmilk or formula, you can offer them a pacifier at any time.

Bedsharing

When a baby sleeps on the same surface as another person, this is called bedsharing.

Bedsharing is not recommended because, whether it is intentional or unintentional, it increases a baby's risk of SUID.

There are many things that make bedsharing even more risky.

It's important for everyone making a safe sleep plan to be aware of these details even if they are not planning on bedsharing because bedsharing can happen unintentionally, and making a safe sleep plan for your baby involves preparing for the expected and unexpected.



While bedsharing, a baby's risk of SUID is...

Some of these factors are easier to control than others, and some can't be changed after a baby is born.

Extremely higher

(more than 10 times higher risk)

- The adult is very drowsy or fatigued.
- The adult is impaired from alcohol, prescription drugs, or other drugs.
- The adult currently smokes, even if not in bed.
- The person who gave birth to the baby smoked during pregnancy.
- The adult and the baby are sleeping on a couch, armchair, waterbed, or older, softer mattress compared to sleeping on a firmer mattress.

Much higher

(5-10 times higher risk)

- The baby is less than 4 months old.
- The baby is sleeping with a grandparent, nonparental caregiver, or sibling.

Higher

(2-5 times higher risk)

- Baby was born preterm (before 37 weeks).
- Baby was born with low birth weight.
- Pillows, blankets, or other soft objects are in the sleeping environment.

In your baby's safe sleep plan, focus on what is in your control and take action to reduce your baby's risk of SUID as much as possible in all scenarios.



Frequently Asked Questions

What is the safest way for me to feed or comfort my baby at night?

Keep your baby's sleep area, like a crib, bassinet, or pack-and-play, close to your bed while both of you are sleeping.

When your baby needs to be fed or comforted at night, bring them into your bed after removing pillows, blankets, and other soft objects from the bed.

Do not feed or comfort your baby on an armchair or sofa when you are both tired. If you accidentally fall asleep, your baby's risk of SUID is higher if you are in an armchair or on a sofa compared to a firm adult bed without any pillows, blankets, or other soft objects nearby.

After feeding or comforting your baby, move your baby back to their usual sleep area, like a crib, bassinet, or pack-and-play.

If you fall asleep while feeding or comforting your baby, move them back to their own sleep space, like a crib, bassinet, or pack-and-play, as soon as possible.

Setting an alarm or timer on a smartphone is one strategy for preventing yourself from falling too deeply asleep when feeding or comforting your baby.

Why isn't it safe for my baby to sleep with a blanket and will they get cold without one?

Blankets increase the risk of your baby being accidentally suffocated during sleep.

Your baby's sleep environment should have no blankets, pillows, toys, or other soft objects for safety.

A tightly fitted sheet can be used on the mattress underneath your baby, but no other bedding should be in their sleep space.

Overheating also increases your baby's risk of dying suddenly and unexpectedly during sleep.

Your baby will be comfortable and safer during sleep when dressed in pajamas and/or a nonweighted sleep sack.

Babies need about the same number of layers as adults need to be comfortable.

To avoid overheating, your baby should have no more than one extra layer compared to adults, and they should not wear a hat while sleeping.

Is my baby at a higher risk of choking when sleeping on their back?

No. Although it may be surprising, your baby is at a lower risk of choking when sleeping on their back because of anatomy and gravity.

When your baby is sleeping on their back, any fluids spit up, regurgitated, or refluxed from the stomach would need to work against gravity to get into their breathing tube and cause them to choke.

When they are sleeping on their stomach, these fluids naturally pool at the opening of the breathing tube, which makes choking more likely.

It is safest for every baby to be placed on their back to sleep for every sleep.

What should I know about cradleboards?

Babies in some Indigenous communities have slept in cradleboards for generations.

If you are interested in connecting with your culture with this traditional practice or have questions, connect with Həłmxiłp Indigenous Birth Justice by scanning or visiting helmxilp.org/cradleboards.

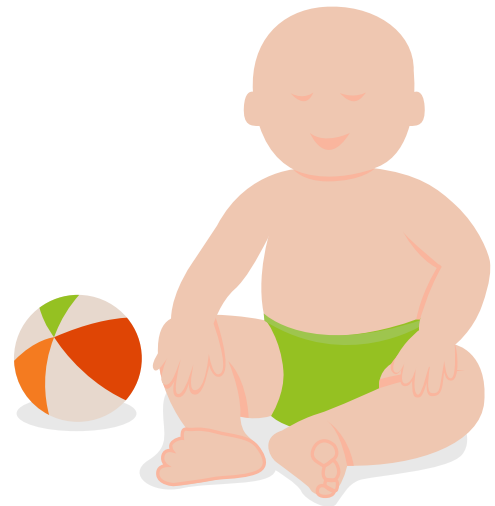


Can my baby safely sleep in a car seat, swing, bouncer, or seated stroller?

It is not safe for your baby to regularly sleep in any of these devices. If your baby falls asleep in any of these devices, they are at an increased risk of suffocation because they are not on a flat, level surface.

If your baby falls asleep in a car seat, swing, bouncer, or seated stroller, it is safest to move them to their regular sleep space as soon as possible.

If your baby falls asleep in one of these devices and you can't move them to their regular sleep space soon, an alert adult should watch them and make sure that their face stays fully visible, with nothing covering their nose or mouth.





After I place my baby on their back to sleep, should I worry about them rolling over in their sleep?

Once your baby can roll over on their own from their back to stomach and from their stomach to back, you don't need to reposition them if you notice they have rolled onto their side or stomach during sleep.

Before your baby can roll in this way, if you notice they have rolled onto their side or stomach during sleep, you can reposition them so they are on their back again.

All babies, regardless of whether they can roll over on their own, should be placed on their back to sleep for every sleep in the first year of life.

Is it safe to swaddle my baby during sleep?

It is not safe to swaddle your baby during sleep after your baby starts to attempt to roll over on their own (usually around 3 months of age) because their risk of suffocation and strangulation increases.

You can choose to swaddle your baby during sleep before they start to roll over on their own because it does not increase or decrease their risk of dying suddenly and unexpectedly.

How can I prevent my baby from getting a flat head when I always place them on their back to sleep?

When your baby is awake and someone is watching them, they should be placed on their stomach for supervised, awake tummy time sessions.

Giving your baby plenty of supervised, awake tummy time can prevent them from getting a flat head.

Tummy time also helps your baby strengthen their neck, shoulder, and arm muscles.

Tummy time is important for your baby's development of movement and motor skills.

Tummy time sessions can start a few days after birth. In the beginning, tummy time sessions should be for short amounts of time and get longer as your baby gets older and has more practice.

Learn more about tummy time by scanning or visiting pathways.org/topics-of-development/tummy-time/.



Ask your healthcare provider if you have any questions about tummy time.



How can I know if a product is safe for my baby to use during sleep?

It can be hard to know which products are safe for babies to use during sleep. Some products are advertised as safe for babies to use during sleep and later get recalled due to being unsafe.

You can find more information about infant sleep product safety and sign up to get emailed about newly recalled products from the Consumer Product Safety Commission by scanning or visiting [cpsc.gov/safesleep](https://www.cpsc.gov/safesleep).



In general, be suspicious of products that claim to prevent your baby from dying suddenly and unexpectedly during sleep.

There are products that increase the risk of this happening and products that decrease the risk of this happening, but there are no products that can fully prevent this from happening.

Some products that have claimed to prevent babies from dying suddenly and unexpectedly during their sleep have resulted in more deaths.

Always ask your healthcare provider if you are unsure about which products are safe for your baby to use during sleep.

This is different from what my parents have told me and different than what I did in the past. What changed?

This booklet has the most up-to-date safe sleep recommendations for babies as it is being written.

Over time, recommendations for how babies sleep have changed because more research has been done on why babies die suddenly and unexpectedly during sleep and in their sleep space.

When babies die in their sleep space, the conditions surrounding the death are studied to learn how to improve keeping babies safe when they sleep.

In the past, babies slept differently because we didn't know what we know now.

Even though we didn't know it at the time, these babies were at an increased risk of dying suddenly and unexpectedly.

In your baby's safe sleep plan, focus on the most recent recommendations to keep them safer during sleep.





Your Baby's Safe Sleep Plan

The usual plan for how your baby will sleep, including:

Where your baby will sleep: _____

What surface your baby will be on when sleeping: _____

What your baby's sleep environment will be like: _____

What your baby will be wearing during sleep: _____

What position your baby will be in when laid to sleep: _____

How your baby might sleep and what you will do in unexpected situations, like:

When visiting friends or family: _____

When traveling: _____

When you find your baby asleep in a way that is different than your usual plan: _____

Your usual plan for feeding or comforting your baby at night, including:

Who will feed or comfort your baby at night: _____

How they will feed or comfort your baby: _____

What they will do when your baby is done being fed or comforted: _____

Other plans to reduce your baby's risk of SUID:

Prefer to learn with videos?

Scan or visit

srhd.org/safesleep

to watch videos designed to help you
make your baby's safe sleep plan.



*Share your plan with
everyone who cares
for your baby.*



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