



Help Your Baby Sleep Safe

Reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep related causes of death by creating a safe sleep space for your baby.



This is What a Safe Sleep Space Looks Like



Baby sleeps alone next to where parents sleep.



Use a firm and flat sleep surface in a safety-approved crib.*



No pillows, blankets, sheepskins, soft objects, toys, or crib bumpers anywhere in baby's sleep space. Make sure nothing covers baby's head.



Back to sleep for naps and at night.



Do not smoke or vape around baby or near their sleep space.

*A crib, bassinet, portable crib, or play yard that follows the safety standards of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is recommended. For information on crib safety, contact the CPSC at 1-800-638-2772 or [cpsc.gov/safesleep](https://www.cpsc.gov/safesleep)

Reflect

What do you think about this sleep space for your baby?

How is this like where your baby sleeps?

How is this different from where your baby sleeps?



**Babies sleep safest alone
in their own space, on a
flat surface, on their back.**

Steps for Safer Sleep

Reduce your baby's risk of sleep-related death by following these recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics:



Always place baby on their back to sleep, for naps and at night.



Share your room with baby, not your bed. Keep baby in a separate sleep space next to their parents bed.



Use a firm and flat sleep surface in a safety-approved space for babies*, covered with a fitted sheet with no other bedding.



No soft objects, toys, crib bumpers, or loose bedding under baby, over baby, or anywhere in baby's sleep area.



Breastfeed your baby to reduce the risk of SIDS.



Pregnant women should get regular prenatal care during pregnancy.



No smoke or vape around baby or in their sleep space.



Think about giving your baby a pacifier for naps and nighttime sleep.

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Pregnant moms should avoid using tobacco, drinking alcohol, using cannabis and illegal drugs during pregnancy and after the baby is born.



Do not let your baby get too hot during sleep. Baby should only wear one more layer of clothing than adults.



Follow guidance from your healthcare provider on your baby's vaccines and regular health checkups.



Avoid products that go against safe sleep recommendations. Just because it is sold in a store for babies, does not mean that it is safe for babies!



Do not use heart or breathing monitors in the home to reduce the risk of SIDS. (Unless recommended by your healthcare provider)



Safe infant sleep can be hard, but your baby is worth it.

Reflect

What questions or concerns do you have about these recommendations?

Where Your Baby Sleeps

There are many options where baby can sleep for naps and at night. Some are safe 👍 and some are risky 👎. Below are some of the options available.



Cribs are safety-approved sleep spaces for babies with a firm and flat sleep surface.



Portable cribs are safety-approved sleep spaces for babies with a firm and flat sleep surface.



Bassinet are safety-approved sleep spaces for babies with a firm and flat sleep surface.



Car seats, swings, bouncers and strollers are not designed for infant safe sleep.



Adult beds are not designed for safe infant sleep.



Couches are not designed for safe infant sleep.



Reflect

Where does (or where will) your baby sleep?

What worries do you have about where your baby sleeps?



Deciding where your infant should and should not sleep is important. Visit tinyurl.com/babysleepnc for more information about different sleep spaces.

Sleeping with Your Baby: Understanding the Risks

Some parents sleep with their babies purposely, and some may fall asleep with their babies accidentally. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) states that **sleeping with your baby is not recommended**. However, certain situations make sleeping with your baby even more dangerous and could lead to death. **You should not sleep with your baby if...**



Your Baby...



Was born more than 3 weeks early, or weighed less than 5lbs 8oz at birth



Is less than 4 months old



Was around tobacco smoke or vape during pregnancy



The Person Sleeping with Baby...



Consumed alcohol, medicines, or drugs that make it harder to wake up, or is overly tired.



Uses tobacco (smoke or vape)



Is not the baby's parent



The Sleep Space...



Has pillows, blankets, a pillow to prop up a baby, nursing pillow, or a very soft mattress



Is a couch, recliner, or chair



Includes other adults, children, and/or pets in the bed



If you said yes to any of these, it is strongly recommended that you stop sleeping with your baby.

Reflect

What are your thoughts about sleeping with your baby or bed sharing?



Have a plan to make sleep safer when feeding or caring for your baby.

Tips for a Safer Sleep Plan

It is normal for babies to wake often at night. This can be challenging. Have a plan to make sleep safer when feeding or caring for your baby. These tips also are great for moms who want to breastfeed and practice safe sleep.



Share your room with baby, not your bed. Keep baby in your room close to your bed, but on a separate sleep surface designed for infants*. This will make it easier for you to feed, comfort, and watch your baby at night.



Keep baby safer during night-time care and feeding.

If you bring baby into your bed for feeding, remove all soft items and bedding from the area. Put baby back in their own sleep space when finished. Bringing your baby into bed for nighttime feeding is recommended over a recliner, chair, or couch because of the increased risk of suffocation.



If you fall asleep while feeding or caring for your baby in your bed, place him or her back in the separate sleep area as soon as you wake up. **Consider setting a timer on your phone to wake you in case you fall asleep.**



Couches and armchairs can be very dangerous for baby. Be mindful of how tired you are, and avoid couches and armchairs for feeding or caring for baby if you think you might fall asleep.



Ask someone to stay with you while you're feeding or caring for baby to keep you awake or to place the baby into a safe sleep area if you fall asleep. **Or consider taking turns.** This means that one caregiver cares for the baby while the other gets time to sleep.

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Reflect

What do you think of these ideas to make sleep safer?

What do you think about breastfeeding and safe sleep?

Taking care of a baby at night can be tough, especially when they wake often or won't sleep. What help do you need to make sleep safer for your baby?



Talk to everyone who watches your baby about safe sleep.

Talking to Others about Safe Sleep

Don't assume that others know about safe sleep. Discuss with **EVERYONE** who watches your baby *where* and *how* your baby sleeps.

Tell others that your baby should sleep...



on their **back**



in a **smoke/vape free** space



on a **firm, flat surface**



with **NO** blankets, pillows (including nursing pillows), or other extra items near them

Reflect

Who do you need to talk to about safe sleep for your baby?

What makes it difficult to talk with others about safe sleep?

What ideas can be useful for having these conversations?



Keeping your baby safe from smoke and vape helps to reduce the risk of SIDS.

Tobacco

Babies exposed to tobacco smoke – either because their moms smoked during pregnancy or because there is smoke in their home or car – are five times more likely to die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).



Thinking about quitting?

Talk to your healthcare provider or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)

There are lots of benefits to mom, baby, and the whole family for quitting tobacco.

Help Your Baby Breathe Easier:

- Quit using tobacco
- Ask others not to smoke/vape around your baby
- Ask others not to smoke/vape in your home or car
- Choose a childcare provider or babysitter who does not smoke/vape
- Avoid places where people smoke/vape
- Put up “No Smoking or Vaping” signs as a friendly reminder
- Ask those who do smoke/vape to wash their hands & change clothes before holding baby.

Reflect

What can you do to keep your baby safe from smoke and vape?

Common Questions About Safe Sleep

Will my baby choke if placed on their back to sleep?

No. Healthy babies naturally swallow or cough up fluids—it's a reflex all people have. Babies may actually clear such fluids better when sleeping on their backs because of the location of the opening to the lungs. There has been no increase in choking or similar problems for babies who sleep on their backs.



My mother tells me that my baby should sleep on his stomach or side, should I follow her advice?

No. We have learned over the years that infants are less likely to die from SIDS if they are placed on their back for every sleep.

How am I going to breastfeed if my baby doesn't sleep with me?

You can put your baby's crib near your bed so that you can easily pick her up for feedings during the night and then return her to her crib for sleeping.

What if I fall asleep with my baby?

Ask others to move the baby back to their crib or set an alarm on your cell for yourself to wake up and move your baby. You can remove all bulky bedding from your bed to reduce the risk of suffocation if you do fall asleep. It is best to not move to a couch or sofa to care for your baby because that is a very dangerous place to fall asleep with your baby.

What can go in a crib?

A bare crib is best. The only things that should go in the crib or pack 'n play with your baby is a tight-fitted sheet on a firm flat mattress. That's it! This means no pillows, blankets, stuffed animals, or bumper pads. These items all increase the risk of suffocation.



Sleeping on the same sleep space with your baby is not recommended because it can increase the risk of sleep-related infant death.



Talk to your healthcare provider about any questions that you have about safe sleep and visit [SafeSleepNC.org](https://www.SafeSleepNC.org) for more information.

Isn't the crib mattress too hard for my baby?

The firm mattress in your crib or pack 'n play are just right for your baby. Only add a fitted sheet. Don't try to make it soft or more comfy for your baby. Soft surfaces are very dangerous for babies because they increase the risk of suffocation.

Won't my baby get hurt if I don't have bumper pads in the crib?

No. Bumper pads should never be used in an infant's crib. The bars on newer cribs are no longer wide enough that a baby could get their head stuck in the crib bars and hurt themselves. Bumper pads can be very dangerous because they can cause suffocation and/or entrapment.

How do I keep my baby warm without using a blanket?

The safest alternative to blankets are sleep sacks—also called wearable blankets. These keep your baby warm and safe because they reduce the risk of suffocation and entrapment caused by regular blankets. You can also dress your baby in one more layer of clothes than you would wear at night.

*Everyone has questions about infant safe sleep.
What questions do you have?*





SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Center for Maternal and Infant Health

SafeSleepNC.org

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