



Help Your Baby Sleep Safe

to Prevent Suffocation and
Reduce the Risk of Sudden Infant
Death Syndrome (SIDS)

SafeSleepNC.org



For the first year to prevent suffocation and reduce the risk of SIDS, *your baby sleeps safest...*



1

Always on their back



2

In a flat and firm crib, bassinet, or pack n play



3

With nothing but baby (without another person, pillows, blankets, or toys in their sleep space)



4

And free from smoke and vape and in the care of someone sober and alert

I'd like to share with you about how to keep your baby safe while they sleep for their first year to prevent suffocation and reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) .

✦ Decades of medical research supports that your baby sleeps safest:



- Always on their back
- In a flat and firm crib, bassinet, or pack n play
- With nothing but baby
(without another person, and without pillows, blankets, or toys)
- And free from smoke and vape and in the care of someone sober and alert

Sadly, once babies come home from the hospital, a leading cause of death is due to unsafe sleep.

This means the baby was put to sleep in a position or space that was not safe and that led to accidental suffocation or strangulation, and increased the risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome).

I know this is hard to hear, but the good news is these deaths are largely preventable by following the American Academy of Pediatrics' safe sleep recommendations. We can talk through these four recommendations more and we can share ways to help your baby sleep safe when you are also sleepy. ✦ ✦

1

Your Baby Sleeps Safest:

Always On Their Back
for Every Nap and at Night



What questions do you have about placing your baby on their back to sleep?





1

Your Baby Sleeps Safest Always On Their Back



Place your baby on his/her back, never their tummy or side, for every nap and at night for the first year. This helps them to breathe best reduces the risk of suffocation and SIDS.

When they get older and roll on their own from their back to their stomach or side, that is fine, but always first place them on their back.



“What questions or concerns do you have about your baby sleeping on their back?”



Your baby is less likely to choke, suffocate, or stop breathing when they are placed on their backs for every nap and nighttime sleep.



Back Sleeping

Your baby clears food and spit up better on their back



Tummy Sleeping

Your baby is less likely to choke, suffocate, or stop breathing when they are placed on their backs for every nap and nighttime sleep.



A lot of parents worry that their baby will choke sleeping on their back. No, babies won't choke when sleeping on their back.

Humans have a gag reflex that keeps us from choking, so if you hear your baby gagging it likely means they're protecting themselves from choking. It is harder to breathe food or spit up into the lungs when we are lying on our backs than when we are lying on our stomachs.

Yes, it is safest for babies to sleep on their backs even if they spit up or have issues with reflux.



2

Your baby sleeps safest:

in a crib, bassinet, or pack and play with a flat and firm mattress with a fitted sheet.



“What questions or concerns do you have about where your baby sleeps?”



2

Your baby sleeps safest:

in a crib, bassinet, or pack and play with a flat and firm mattress with a fitted sheet.



Your baby should never sleep in an adult bed, couch, or chair.

They should also never sleep in inclined bed, swing, bouncy seat, soft sided bed, or baby hammock, and a car seat should only be used while driving. Once out of the car, baby should not sleep in their carseat because their head positioning is no longer safe.

These sleep spaces should be avoided because they have been shown to increase the risk of suffocation and asphyxiation.

You might like to sleep on a soft mattress and with a pillow, but a firm mattress without a pillow is safest for your baby. Don't try to make it softer by adding extra cushions, blankets, bumper pads, or pillows. When thinking about where your baby will sleep check to see if your baby's nose and/or mouth could be covered or blocked in any way?



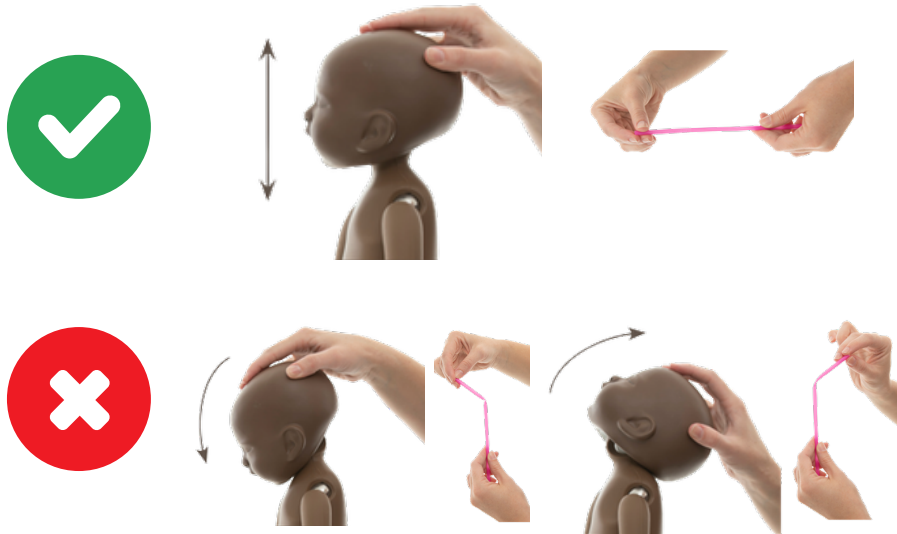
“What questions or concerns do you have about where your baby sleeps?”



Your baby's sleep space should be flat and firm.

Flat:

Baby's neck should be straight when they sleep like a drinking straw so they can breathe while they sleep.



Firm:

The mattress should not indent when pressed. A firm mattress reduces the risk of suffocation



When looking for a sleep space for your baby, make sure it is flat and firm.

Flat:

Means your baby's airway stays straight like a straw. Their neck should be totally straight while they sleep so they can breathe while they sleep.



Firm:

Means the mattress should not indent when pressed, but should be firm to reduce the risk of suffocation.



Even if baby has reflux or spits up do not incline their mattress because that can cause the baby to shift into an unsafe position. And your baby doesn't need a soft mattress, firm is best.

3

Your Baby
Sleeps Safest:

With nothing
but baby!

This means without pillows, blankets, or toys
or another person in their sleep space.



What do you think about this recommendation?



3

Your baby sleeps safest with Nothing but baby!

This means only baby sleeping in their own space.

No blankets, pillows, stuffed animals.

And not sleeping with another person—a parent, caregiver, or sibling



Having these items near your baby while they sleep or sleeping with your baby is not safe because of the risk of injury or death. Babies are very vulnerable to suffocation and strangulation because they are not strong enough to move if they are in a position where they are unable to breathe.

This can easily happen if:

- Someone rolls over baby or something is pressed on baby
- If baby's face becomes covered by soft bedding
- Or if the baby becomes trapped between two objects, such as a mattress and a wall.



What do you think about this recommendation?



Sleeping with Your Baby: Understanding the Risks

It is recommended to never sleep with your baby on the same space because it greatly increases the risk of injury, suffocation, and death.

The below situations make sleeping with your baby even more dangerous, when:



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



Are there times that baby does sleep with you or someone else?



Sleeping with Your Baby: Understanding the Risks

Some parents sleep with their babies purposely, and some may fall asleep with their babies accidentally. There are a number of reasons why parents might do this.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) states that sleeping with your baby on a shared space is never recommended because it greatly increases the risk of injury, suffocation, and death.

The below situations make sleeping with your baby even more dangerous and could lead to death.

It is especially dangerous to sleep with your baby when...



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

Do any of these risks sound like your situation?

How does this make you feel about sleeping with your baby?

If you do sleep with your baby, can you share why?

If you sleep with your baby on purpose or by accident would you be open to learning ways to keep them close by, but safe in their own space?



Are there times that baby does sleep with you or someone else?



Share your room with your baby, Not Your Bed

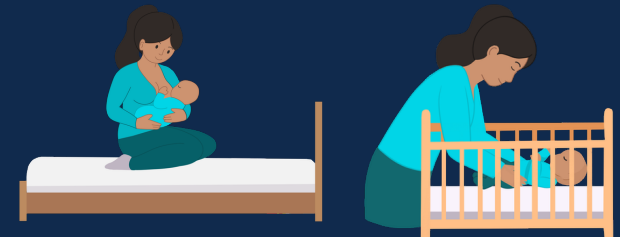
Placing baby in their own crib, pack n play, or bassinet in your room will help protect your baby while they sleep.



If you bring them into your bed to feed or care for them move all blankets and pillows out the way



Set a timer on your phone to wake you after a few minutes in case you fall asleep



After you care for your baby put them back in their sleep space

Research shows that it is safest to have your baby sleep in your room, but in his/her own crib, bassinet or pack n play placed in your room.

This way you can care for them at night, but then allow them to sleep safely in their own space.



If you bring them into your bed to feed or care for them move all blankets and pillows out the way.



Set a timer on your phone to wake you after a few minutes in case you fall asleep, and then place baby back in their sleep space.



After you care for your baby put them back in their sleep space.

You might feel that you are protecting your infant by having them sleep with you, but sadly, most sleep related infant deaths in North Carolina happen when a baby sleeps on the same surface with someone else—could be a parent, caregiver, or sibling.

When your baby sleeps in their own space you are keeping them safe from injury or death.



Your Baby Sleeps Safest:

With nothing but baby

No Pillows



No Blankets



No Toys



These items in a baby's sleep space
increases the risk of suffocation



What do you think about removing these items from
your baby's sleep space?



Your Baby Sleeps Safest:

With nothing but baby also means no pillows, no blankets, and no toys in your baby's sleep space.

These items can easily block a baby's nose and mouth and cause suffocation.



You might think these items are important, but please keep in mind:

- Babies do not need pillows to be comfortable. The firm flat mattress is perfect for keeping them safe.
- Instead of using a blanket, consider using a sleep sack or dress baby in layers
- Toys are cute, but need to stay out of baby's sleep space for the first year of life



What do you think about removing these items from your baby's sleep space?



4

Your baby sleeps safest when:

**Free from
smoke and vape
and in the care
of someone
sober and alert**



4

Your baby sleeps safest when:
**Free from smoke
and vape and in the
care of someone
sober and alert**



- Babies exposed to smoke or vape are at higher risk of sleep-related deaths and SIDS
- It is especially important that someone who smokes or vapes does not sleep in the same bed with baby, even if they do not smoke in bed. Babies who sleep with people who smoke are at much higher risk for SIDS and other sleep-related deaths.
- Your baby is also at much higher risk of an accidental sleep-related death when the parent or caregiver is not sober or alert due to consuming alcohol, using opioids, cannabis, or other substances, including prescribed medicine that makes someone sleepy and less alert.
- It is harder to practice safe sleep if the caregiver is not sober and alert.
- An infant is at much higher risk of dying if they sleep with someone who is using substances or medicine that make them less alert.

5 Tips to Help Your Baby Sleep

1. Set easy - to - remember routines

- Try to do the same things each day in the same order at naptime and bedtime.

2. Have tools to help you stay awake during feedings

- Set a timer on your phone or watch to wake you in case you fall asleep caring for your baby.

3. Understand your baby's sleep cycles

- Newborns sleep 16 to 17 hours each day and wake up every one or two hours. This is normal!

4. Help avoid extra night wakings

- Help your baby fall back asleep quickly between feedings.

5. Accept help from others

- Parenting is hard and everyone needs help sometimes.



5 Tips to Help Your Baby Sleep

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4. Help avoid extra night wakings

- There are things you can do to help your baby fall back asleep quickly between feedings.
 - Remember nighttime feedings are not play time. Keep the lights dim and the environment quiet, so that your baby learns they should sleep after the nighttime feeding.
 - Place your baby down to sleep while they are still a little bit awake. This helps them learn how to self-soothe.
 - To help your baby self-soothe, there are a few techniques you can try. When responding to your baby's crying, start by looking at them. Next, use your voice (speaking softly). Progress slowly and allow time between each step before moving on to other techniques like light touch, massage, picking them up and rocking them.

5. Accept help from others

- Parenting is hard and everyone needs help sometimes. If you feel overwhelmed and exhausted, consider asking a trusted friend, family member or other seasoned parent to step in and help.
- Explain the steps in your safe sleep routine and let them know that you would like everyone to follow them.



Visit SafeSleepNC.org
for more information and resources
to help your baby sleep safer



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