

Safe Sleep

► Learning about safe sleep can help protect babies from sudden infant death syndrome. Safe sleeping practices can reduce the risk of sleep-related deaths.

What Is Safe Sleep?

Safe sleep means putting your baby to sleep in ways that protect him or her from potential harm. A series of guidelines were formally created to help promote safe sleep in babies and raise awareness about sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), the leading cause of death in babies one year old and younger. Safe sleep guidelines include the following.

- Put a baby in bed on his or her back to prevent suffocation and choking.
- Have your baby sleep in his or her own bed, not in bed with anyone else. Being in the same room is good; being in the same bed is not.
- Use a flat and firm baby mattress in a crib or bassinet. Use a tight-fitting sheet on the mattress.
- Keep the baby's bed free of clutter, including toys, pillows, and blankets, during every nap and sleep time.

Importance of Safe Sleep

The leading causes of death in infants between one month and one year old are sleep-related incidents. Because babies do not have as much muscle and control over their bodies, they may not be able to roll away from a pillow or toy that suffocates them. Following the guidelines for safe sleep will help protect your baby from SIDS, suffocation, strangulation, and other potential threats.

Statistics on SIDS

- Racial minorities, notably non-Hispanic black infants and Native American infants, are at a higher risk for SIDS.
- Approximately 3,500 SIDS or sudden unexpected infant death (SUID) cases occur in the United States every year.
- From 2014 to 2018, Alabama had the highest rate of SUID deaths in the country, estimated at 178.3 per 1,000 births.



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