

Safe sleep for your child under 2 years old

Babies and young children spend a lot of time sleeping. It is important to protect them while they sleep, as well as when they are awake. The safe sleep tips below can help make sure your child has a safe place to sleep.

Can I sleep in the same bed as my baby?

Do **NOT** sleep in the same bed as your baby. Make sure other children and adults do not share a bed with them either. Sleeping in the same bed with your baby can lead to sleep-related deaths, such as SIDS and suffocation.

Instead, move your baby's crib or bassinet into your bedroom. Place the crib within arm's reach. Sharing a room decreases the risk of SIDS and is recommended for the first 6 months of life.

Where should my baby sleep?

If your child is younger than 2 years old, the safest place for your child to sleep is in a crib. This helps to prevent falls and decrease the chance of getting hurt.

If you are tired and holding a sleeping baby, please put them back in their crib so you can get some rest.

It is important that you follow these instructions:

- Have your baby sleep in their crib.
- Place your baby on their back in the crib.
- Remove all crib bumpers, pillows, blankets, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, toys, stuffed animals and other soft products from the crib. Your baby could suffocate from these things.
- Move the crib or bassinet into your bedroom to have your baby close to you. This will make it easier for you to care for and feed them.
- Keep your baby's head uncovered during sleep.
- Your baby should **NOT** sleep:
 - On a couch, chair, soft mattress, pillow, waterbed or other soft surface. They could:
 - Suffocate from these things.
 - Suffocate from sliding between pillows.
 - Get hurt from rolling onto the floor.
 - In the arms of a sleeping adult.
 - In a bouncy seat, swing or car seat. If they fall asleep in one of these items, move them to their crib.
 - In bed with you or other children. They could get hurt from someone rolling on them.



In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

Safe sleep for your child under 2 years old, continued

In what position should my baby sleep?

ALWAYS lay your baby on their back to sleep.

- This is the safest way for them to sleep unless your doctor tells you something different.
- Place your baby on their back for every sleep, including naps. This helps prevent sleep-related deaths such as SIDS and suffocation.

Do **NOT** use:

- Crib bumpers.
- Pillows, blankets, quilts or comforters.
- Toys or stuffed animals.
- Mobiles that your baby can reach.
- Wedges, positioners or other products that claim to keep babies in place.

Heart and breathing monitors (not prescribed by your doctor) do not prevent SIDS and are not recommended.

What temperature should I keep the room where my baby sleeps?

Do not overheat your baby. This can lead to SIDS.

- Keep the thermostat set where it is comfortable for adults who are lightly dressed. This is most often between 68°F and 72°F – **never over 75°F**.
- Instead of using covers in cool weather, dress your baby in a lightweight, one-piece blanket sleeper or sleep sack to help keep them warm.
- Do not cover your baby's face or head.

What else can I do to help protect my baby?

Other things you can do include:

- Make sure the crib slats are no more than 2 ³/₈ inches apart.
- Your baby's crib at home should have fixed sides. This means you should not be able to lower the rails on either side.
- Smoking is dangerous to your baby and increases the risk of SIDS. Never allow anyone to smoke around your baby – at home, in a car or at daycare.
- Alcohol, marijuana, opioid and illicit drug use by caregivers is dangerous and increases risk of SIDS. Avoid these during pregnancy and after birth.
- Offer a clean, dry pacifier to suck on during sleep if your baby will use one. If you breastfeed, make sure your baby feeds easily with no problems before letting them use a pacifier.
- Feeding human milk (breast milk) to your baby, when possible, decreases the risk of sleep-related deaths and SIDS.
- Make sure your baby gets their scheduled vaccines.

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Safe sleep for your child under 2 years old, continued

Why does my baby need tummy time?

Tummy time:

- Is when you place your baby on their tummy so they can play and interact with you.
- Helps to strengthen their arm and leg muscles. This helps get them ready for crawling and walking when they get older.
- Can help keep your baby's head from getting flat by changing their position during the day. You can also hold your baby upright in your arms from time to time to keep your baby's head from getting flat.

Offer tummy time:

- **When your baby is fully awake and you are able to stay with them.**
- Two to 3 times each day for about 3 to 5 minutes when they are first born. Increase the amount of time each day.
- After a diaper change or nap, or other times that work best for you.

Where can I learn more?

You may visit these websites to learn more:

- Safe to Sleep – nichd.nih.gov/sts/Pages/default.aspx
- Safe Sleep – aap.org/en/patient-care/safe-sleep
- Why Do Babies Need Tummy Time? – choa.org/parent-resources/orthopedics/tummy-time-tools

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta has not reviewed all of the sites listed as resources and does not make any representations regarding their content or accuracy. Children's Healthcare of Atlanta does not recommend or endorse any particular products, services or the content or use of any third party websites, or make any determination that such products, services or websites are necessary or appropriate for you or for the use in rendering care to patients. Children's Healthcare of Atlanta is not responsible for the content of any of the above-referenced sites or any sites linked to these Sites. Use of the services referenced and/or links provided in this teaching sheet is at your sole risk.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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