

Safe Sleeping For Your Child Under 2 Years of Age



Patient and Family Education

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.

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 sleeping tips below can help make sure that your child has a safe place to sleep.

When your child is in the hospital

If your child is at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta:

- If your child is younger than 2 years old, he needs to sleep in a crib with the side rails up. This helps to prevent falls and decrease the chance of injury.
- If your baby cannot roll from his back to his stomach, place him on his back in the crib.
- The safest place for your child to sleep is in his crib. If you are tired and holding a sleeping child, please put him back in his bed so you can get some rest.
- Remove all pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys and other soft products from the crib.
- Keep your child's head uncovered during sleep.
- Do not overheat your child by using extra blankets and quilts.
- Do not place your child on a sofa, soft mattress, pillow or other soft surface to sleep. If your child needs special care, your child's doctor can order it and our staff will check your child's safety needs.

Can I sleep in the same bed (co-sleep) with my child?

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta does not advise co-sleeping for children younger than 2 years old. This is due to the increased risk for injury. Bed sharing or co-sleeping can harm young children.

- If you choose to sleep with your baby and he is 6 months old or less, the nurse will put him on a cardiac monitor.
- Other adults, children, or brothers and sisters should NOT share a bed with your child while in the hospital.

When your baby is at home

Where should my baby sleep?

Have your baby sleep in his own crib without any pillows or heavy blankets in the crib with him.

- Bring the crib or bassinet into your bedroom so you can have your baby close to you.
- Your baby should **NOT** sleep in the bed with you or other children.
 - He could suffocate from the pillows or blankets.
 - He could also be injured from someone rolling on him.
- Your baby should also **NOT** sleep on a couch, chair, pillow, waterbed or other soft surface.
 - He could suffocate from sliding between the pillows.
 - He could also be injured from rolling onto the floor.

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

Safe sleeping, continued

What position should my baby sleep in?

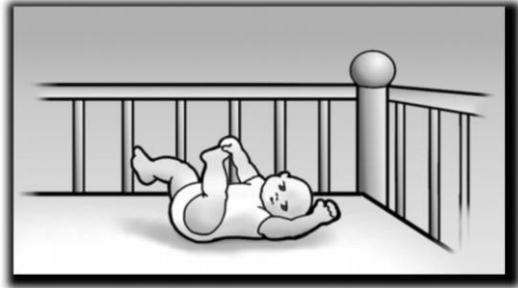
ALWAYS lay your baby on his back to sleep.

- This is the safest way for him to sleep unless your doctor tells you something different.
- Laying him on his back helps to prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, also called crib death or SIDS. This includes when he naps during the day and when he sleeps at night.

Use a firm mattress without anything else in the crib.

Do not use:

- Pillows, blankets or quilts
- Toys or stuffed animals
- Crib bumpers
- Mobiles that your baby can reach



Can I sleep in the same bed as my baby?

Sleeping in the same bed with your baby can cause him harm. This is especially true if he is:

- Less than 2 years old
- Premature or has a medical condition of some kind
- Small enough that part of his body could become trapped between your body and the bedrails

Instead, move your baby's bed into your bedroom and place it within arm's reach. This will make it easier for you to care for and feed him. Make sure that other children and adults do not share a bed with your baby either.

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

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

- Keep the thermostat set so that it is comfortable for adults who are lightly dressed. This is usually 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 him warm.
- Do not cover your baby's face or head.

What else can I do to help protect my baby when he sleeps?

Other things you can do include:

- Make sure the crib slats are no more than 2 3/8 inches apart. The crib should also have fixed sides. This means you should not be able to lower the rails on either side.
- Make sure that the air your baby breathes is smoke-free. **Never** allow anyone to smoke around your baby – at home, in a car or in day care.
- If your baby will use one, offer a clean, dry pacifier to suck on during sleep. If you breastfeed, wait until your baby is a month old before giving him one.

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Safe sleeping, continued

How can I help keep my baby's head from getting flat?

You can help keep your baby's head from getting flat by changing his position during the day.

- Hold your baby upright in your arms from time to time.
- When your baby is fully awake and you are **able to stay with him**, offer him Tummy Time. Tummy Time is when you place your baby on his tummy so he can play and interact with you.
 - When he is first born, do this 2 to 3 times each day for about 3 to 5 minutes. Increase the amount of time each day. A good time for Tummy Time is after a diaper change or nap.
 - Tummy Time also helps to strengthen your baby's arm and leg muscles. This helps get him ready for crawling and walking when he gets older.



An adult should always be present for Tummy Time.

Where can I find more information about safe sleep for my child?

You can find more information at these websites:

- Safe Sleep for Your Baby at https://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/Documents/STS_SafeSleepForYourBaby_General_2013.pdf
- Children's Healthcare of Atlanta – Well Child Tips at <http://www.choa.org/child-health-glossary/well-child-tips>
- A Parent's Guide to Safe Sleep from the American Academy of Pediatrics at <http://www.healthychildcare.org/pdf/SIDSparentsafesleep.pdf>
- Children's Healthcare of Atlanta - Tummy Time Tools at <http://www.choa.org/patients-families/hospital-support-services/new-parents/tummy-time-tools>

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