

Your Newborn's Safety

SAFE INFANT SLEEP

Babies are safest when sleeping alone, on their backs in a crib near their parents' bed for the first year of life. Suffocation and strangulation in an adult bed is the leading cause of death for infants under one year of age in the state of Florida. The risk of sleeping-related infant death is 40 times higher for babies who sleep in adult beds compared to babies who sleep in their own cribs.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the following:

- ▶ Place babies on their backs (face up) every time they sleep. Sleeping on the stomach or side increases the risk of suffocation. Once an infant can roll from back to stomach and stomach to back, the infant can remain in the sleeping position they choose.
- ▶ The crib mattress should fit tightly in its frame and have a snug fitted sheet.
- ▶ No other objects should be placed in the crib.
- ▶ The crib should always be placed in a room that is smoke free.
- ▶ Offering a pacifier has also been linked to a decreased risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- ▶ If breastfeeding, wait until breastfeeding is well-established before offering a pacifier.
- ▶ If you bring your baby into bed for feeding or comforting, please put them back in their own crib or bassinet when you are ready to return to sleep.
- ▶ Keep the room temperature of your baby's sleeping area comfortable for a lightly clothed adult. This will help keep your baby from getting too hot or overheated.
- ▶ Over-bundling should be avoided due to the possibility of overheating. Infants are typically comfortable with one layer more than an adult would wear to be comfortable in the same environment.
- ▶ Never prop a bottle.
- ▶ If your baby has a crib, lower the mattress when your baby learns to sit, and again when he learns to stand.
- ▶ Respond to your baby's cries during the night.



Important Information!

Sleeping with your baby is dangerous. Even if your baby is breastfed and you don't smoke, drink alcohol or use drugs or other medications, sleeping with your baby still increases your baby's risk of suffocation or strangulation while sleeping. The only way to protect your baby from higher risk is to have your baby sleep alone in a crib.

10 TIPS TO HELP YOUR BABY SLEEP AT NIGHT

1. Make sure your baby has active playtime, such as "tummy time," during the day.
2. Respond to your baby's needs quickly during the day to reduce your baby's stress.
3. Allow for skin-to-skin contact during the day.
4. Keep a consistent schedule for meals, naps and bedtime.
5. Use a bedtime routine of three or four relaxing activities to help your baby wind down (giving your baby a bath, gently massaging muscles, and then spending a short period of quiet time together). Research has shown that babies who have a bedtime routine fall asleep 30% faster, wake up 50% less often, and sleep for longer stretches of time.
6. Talk or sing softly to your baby before bed. Just the sound of your voice is very soothing to your baby.
7. Put your baby in the crib when he or she begins to look tired, but is still awake. Putting babies to bed while they are tired, but still awake, helps them learn to fall asleep on their own.
8. If your baby seems restless at bedtime, put your baby to bed 30 minutes earlier. When babies become overtired, they sometimes become energetic and fight off sleep.
9. Play soft music, turn on a fan or put a ticking clock near your baby's crib. Listening to repetitive sounds lulls babies off to sleep. Continuing normal household activities while babies sleep helps them learn to sleep without silence.
10. Place a warm towel down on your baby's sheet and remove it just before you place your baby down.

If you have tried all of these suggestions and your baby is still not sleeping well, talk to your baby's nurse or doctor. There may be a medical reason for your baby's restless nights.



Positive Parenting Activities that Promote Nurturing and Attachment

- › Breastfeeding
- › Responding promptly to your baby's cries
- › Rocking, singing and comforting your baby
- › Maintaining loving relationships with other caregivers
- › Keeping primary caregivers consistent over time so attachments can form



OTHER SAFETY TIPS FOR NEWBORNS

A Home Safety Checklist should be completed at each stage of your child's development. A sample checklist is provided for you on page 70.

Most infant **falls** are from furniture. Help prevent falls by:

- › Never leaving your baby unsupervised on any surface above the floor
- › Always using the safety belts on changing tables, bouncy seats and swings

Most **burns** in children under five are caused by scalding liquids.

Help prevent burns by:

- › Setting your hot water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or below
- › Never carrying hot liquids while carrying your infant
- › Never warming baby bottles in the microwave—microwaves heat unevenly and your baby may be burned by hot spots

Drowning can happen quickly and silently. Help prevent drowning by:

- › Always staying with your baby during bath time
- › Never leaving an older child to watch your baby near the water

Many everyday items can cause **choking or suffocation** in infants. Help prevent choking and suffocation by:

- › Removing small objects and plastic bags from your baby's environment
- › Keeping balloons, blind cords and strings away from your baby

HERE'S HELP



Use the **Family Resources on pages 72–78** to learn about a variety of family support services available in your community.

You can keep your infant safe and help prevent **motor vehicle injuries** by:

- › Always placing your newborn in a rear-facing infant car seat whenever you travel in a vehicle
- › Never leaving your infant alone in the car—even in mild weather, the temperature inside a car can reach dangerous levels in minutes