

HELPING YOUR BABY SLEEP SAFELY

Children who are less than two years old are at an increased risk of suffocation if placed in an unsafe place to sleep. Infants who are less than six months of age are especially at risk because of their weaker neck muscles and their inability to move their heads.

NO MATTER WHERE YOUR BABY SLEEPS, HE SHOULD ALWAYS BE PLACED WITH HIS BACK ON THE MATTRESS. NEVER PUT YOUR BABY TO SLEEP ON HER TUMMY.

NEVER place your baby to sleep on a soft surface. ***DO NOT*** put soft quilts, blankets, pillows or comforters underneath your baby.

If you choose to have your baby sleep in a bassinet or crib, you should:

1. Make certain that the mattress is firm and flat.
2. Make sure the railings on the crib are no more than 2 3/8 inches apart. Some of the older cribs are not safe because the railings are too far apart and could allow your baby's head to become trapped.
3. Remove any soft pillows or objects that could suffocate your baby.
4. Make certain that the mattress fits tightly against the sides of the bassinet or the railings of the crib so your baby's head cannot become trapped between the mattress and the sides.
5. Make certain that there are no decorative trimmings on the crib that could allow your child's clothing to become caught.
6. Remove hanging toys, mobiles, and rattles when your baby can begin to sit up (around 5 – 6 months).
7. When your baby can pull herself to standing, lower the level of the mattress and remove bumper pads, so she will not be able to climb out of the crib.

If you choose to have your child sleep in bed with you, you should:

1. ***NEVER*** sleep on a water mattress
2. ***NEVER*** use alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes. Babies who sleep with parents who smoke have an increased risk of dying of SIDS. Parents who have been using alcohol or drugs can roll over and suffocate their babies.
3. Do not use railings on the bed – your baby's head could become trapped between the mattress and the railings.
4. Be careful where your bed is placed. Your baby's head can become trapped between the bed's mattress and the wall, so move your bed into the middle of the room.
5. Make sure your baby will not be covered by your bedding or blankets.
6. ***NEVER*** allow older children to sleep in bed with you and your new baby.

NEVER LEAVE YOUR CHILD UNATTENDED IN AN INFANT SWING OR SEAT.

NEVER FALL ASLEEP WITH YOUR BABY WHILE ON A COUCH OR SOFT CHAIR WITH CUSHIONS.

Used with permission: Jane E. Anderson, M.D. "Prescriptions for Parents"

