

Safe Sleep

For Your Baby

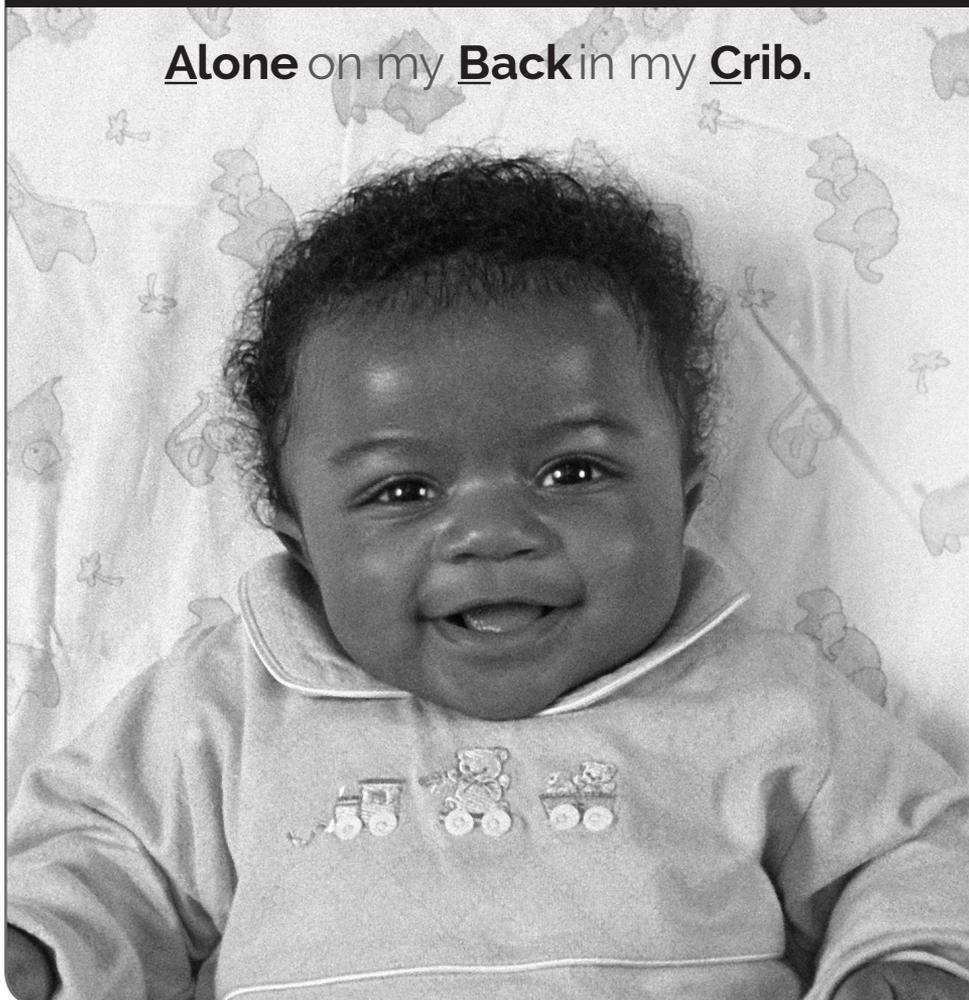
Reduce the Risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and Other Sleep-Related Causes of Infant Death





The **ABCs** of Safe Sleep

Alone on my Back in my Crib.



What is SIDS?

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden, unexplained death of a baby younger than 1 year of age that doesn't have a known cause even after a complete investigation.

Sleep-related causes of infant death are those linked to how or where a baby sleeps or slept. They are due to accidental causes, such as: suffocation; entrapment, when baby gets trapped between two objects, such as a mattress and wall, and can't breathe; or strangulation, when something presses on or wraps around baby's neck, blocking baby's airway. These deaths are not SIDS.

Fast facts about SIDS:

- SIDS is the leading cause of death in babies 1 month to 1 year of age.
- Most SIDS deaths happen when babies are between 1 month and 4 months of age.

What should I know about SIDS?

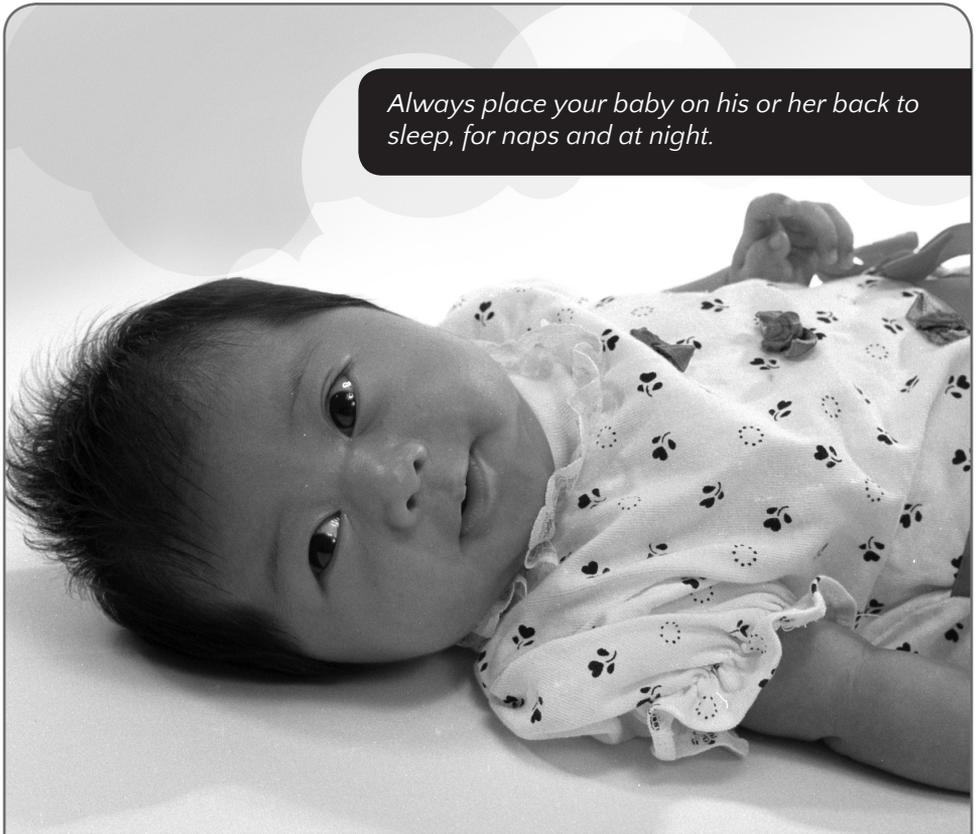
We have made great progress in reducing SIDS. Since awareness campaigns that stressed back sleeping for babies started in 1994, the SIDS rate in the United States has dropped by 50 percent. This decreased rate equals thousands of babies' lives and is a result of parents and caregivers placing babies on their backs to sleep.

Despite these decreases, African American and American Indian/Alaska Native babies are at higher risk for SIDS, based on their numbers within the U.S. population, than are Hispanic American, Asian American, or white babies.

Babies sleep safest on their backs. Babies who sleep on their backs are much less likely to die of SIDS than are babies who sleep on their stomachs or sides.

Every sleep time counts. Babies should sleep on their backs for all sleep times—for naps and at night. Babies who are used to sleeping on their backs but who are then placed on their stomachs to sleep, like for a nap, are at very high risk of SIDS.

Sleep surface matters. Babies who sleep on a soft surface, such as an adult bed, or under a soft covering, such as a soft blanket or quilt, are more likely to die of SIDS or suffocation.



What can I do to lower my baby's risk of SIDS and other sleep-related causes of infant death?

There is no sure way to prevent SIDS, but parents and caregivers can take these steps to reduce the risk of SIDS and other sleep-related causes of infant death:

Always place a baby on his or her back to sleep, for naps and at night, to reduce the risk of SIDS. The back sleep position is the safest position for all babies, including preterm babies. Keep in mind that every sleep time counts.

Use a firm sleep surface, covered by a fitted sheet, to reduce the risk of SIDS and other sleep-related causes of infant death. Firm sleep surfaces can include safety-approved* cribs, bassinets, and portable play areas. Do not use a car seat, carrier, swing, or similar product as baby's everyday sleep area. Never place baby to sleep on soft surfaces, such as on a couch or sofa, pillows, quilts, sheepskins, or blankets.

Your baby should not sleep in an adult bed, on a couch, or on a chair alone, with you, or with anyone else. Room sharing—keeping baby's sleep area in the same room where you sleep—reduces the risk of SIDS and other sleep-related causes of infant death. If you bring your baby into your bed to breastfeed, make sure to put him or her back in a separate sleep area in your room, such as a safety-approved* crib, bassinet, or portable play area, when you are finished.

*For information on crib safety, contact the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772 or <http://www.cpsc.gov>.

Keep soft objects, toys, and loose bedding out of your baby's sleep area to reduce the risk of SIDS and other sleep-related causes of infant death. Don't use pillows, blankets, quilts, sheepskins, or crib bumpers anywhere in your baby's sleep area. Evidence does not support using crib bumpers to prevent injury. In fact, crib bumpers can cause serious injuries and even death. Keeping them out of baby's sleep area is the best way to avoid these dangers.

To reduce the risk of SIDS, women should:

- Get regular health care during pregnancy, and
- Not smoke, drink alcohol, or use illegal drugs during pregnancy or after the baby is born.

To reduce the risk of SIDS, do not smoke during pregnancy, and do not smoke or allow smoking around your baby.

Breastfeed your baby to reduce the risk of SIDS. Breastfeeding has many health benefits for mother and baby.

Give your baby a dry pacifier that is not attached to a string for naps and at night to reduce the risk of SIDS. But don't force the baby to use it. If the pacifier falls out of baby's mouth during sleep, there is no need to put the pacifier back in. Wait until baby is used to breastfeeding before trying a pacifier.

Place babies on their stomachs when they are awake and when someone is watching. Tummy Time helps your baby's head, neck, and shoulder muscles get stronger and helps to prevent flat spots on the head.



Do not let your baby get too hot during sleep. Dress your baby in light sleep clothing or in no greater than one layer more of clothing than an adult would wear to be comfortable. Keep the room at a temperature that is comfortable for an adult.

Follow health care provider guidance on your baby's vaccines and regular health checkups.



Avoid products that claim to reduce the risk of SIDS and other sleep-related causes of infant death. These wedges, positioners, and other products have not been tested for safety or effectiveness.

Do not use home heart or breathing monitors to reduce the risk of SIDS. If you have questions about using these monitors for other health conditions, talk with your baby's health care provider.

Give your baby plenty of Tummy Time when he or she is awake and when someone is watching. Supervised Tummy Time helps your baby's neck, shoulder, and arm muscles get stronger. It also helps to prevent flat spots on the back of your baby's head. Holding baby upright and limiting time in carriers and bouncers can also help prevent flat spots on the back of baby's head.

If you bring your baby into your bed to breastfeed, make sure to put him or her back in a separate sleep area in your room, such as a safety-approved* crib, when you are finished.



Answers to common questions about SIDS

What is the best way to reduce my baby's risk for SIDS?

Placing your baby on his or her back to sleep for every sleep time is the best way to reduce the risk of SIDS.

Will my baby choke if placed on the back to sleep?

No. Healthy babies naturally swallow or cough up fluids—it's a reflex all people have. Babies might actually clear such fluids better when on their backs.

What if my baby rolls onto the stomach on his or her own during sleep? Do I need to put my baby in the back sleep position again if this happens?

No. Rolling over is an important and natural part of your baby's growth. Most babies start rolling over on their own around 4 to 6 months of age. If your baby rolls over on his or her own during sleep, you do not need to turn the baby over onto his or her back. The important thing is that the baby start off every sleep time on his or her back to reduce the risk of SIDS, and that there is no soft, loose bedding in the baby's sleep area.

*For information on crib safety, contact the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772 or <http://www.cpsc.gov>.

Spread the word!

Make sure everyone who cares for your baby knows the ways to reduce the risk of SIDS and other sleep-related causes of infant death.

Remember: Babies sleep safest on their backs, and every sleep time counts!

Help family members, babysitters, daycare workers — EVERYONE — reduce your baby's risk of SIDS and ensure a safe sleep area for your baby. Share these safe sleep messages with everyone who cares for your baby or for any baby younger than 1 year of age.





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