

Safe Sleep for Babies

One of your most important jobs as a parent is keeping your baby safe.

Here's how to make sure your baby sleeps in the safest way possible.

Now, many parents worry about sudden infant death syndrome, or SIDS.

To reduce the risk of SIDS, put your baby to sleep on their back— not the side or belly—until their first birthday.

Giving your baby a pacifier at nap time and bedtime also may reduce the risk of SIDS.

If your baby is breastfed, experts recommend waiting until your baby is 3 or 4 weeks old and breastfeeding is going well before you offer a pacifier.

Now, there are lots of places that babies can fall asleep.

But the safest place for a baby—for at least the first 6 months, and for the first year, if you can—is in a crib or bassinet in your room.

A baby in your bed can suffocate.

And a baby in a car seat, sling, swing, bouncer, or stroller can have trouble breathing.

Blankets, stuffed animals, toys, pillows, bumper pads—these can be cute and cozy, but they're all things that could block your baby's mouth or trap your baby.

Believe it or not, this is what your baby's crib, cradle, or bassinet should look like— nice and empty.

Nothing in it except a firm mattress and a fitted sheet.

If you think your baby needs more warmth, instead of a blanket, you can use a sleep sack.

But keep in mind that babies sleep best in a cool room, just like adults.

So if you can wear a long-sleeve T-shirt and pants without feeling cold, the room temperature is probably about right.

And if your baby wakes up sweaty, the room is probably too hot.

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So now you know how to keep your sleeping baby as safe as possible.

And when you know you're doing your best to keep your baby safe, it can help you sleep better.

And that's always a good thing.

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