

## Other important things to remember

A crying baby can test the patience of even the most loving caregiver. Learn how to safely soothe a crying baby at [www.babycries.org](http://www.babycries.org).

The back of your baby's head is soft until the age of about four months. You can avoid flat spots on baby's head by

- limiting the amount of awake time that the back of baby's head is resting against a solid object such as a car seat, carrier or bouncer.
- giving him or her lots of "tummy time" when baby is awake and someone is watching baby. While lying on the tummy (stomach), baby can play and also strengthen his or her neck, shoulders and arms.
- placing the baby's feet so they touch the top of the sleep area one week and the bottom of the sleep area the next week.

\* Details about safe cribs can be found on the Consumer Product Safety Commission website. [www.cpsc.gov/en/Safety-Education/Safety-Education-Centers/cribs/](http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Safety-Education/Safety-Education-Centers/cribs/)

## DHS is

responsible for providing and administering publicly funded human services to Allegheny County residents.

## DHS Principles

All services will be:

- High quality, comprehensive and accessible.
- Individualized and designed to be respectful of the unique cultural characteristics of each individual and/or community.
- Integrated and offered through a team approach that recognizes the capacity of individuals and families to identify their own strengths, needs and goals; create relationships and natural supports; and take steps necessary to accomplish these goals.



## Human Services Building

One Smithfield Street, Fourth Floor

Pittsburgh, PA 15222

phone: 412-350-5701

fax: 412-350-4004

[www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs.aspx](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs.aspx)

The Allegheny County Department of Human Services does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of a protected class including: race; color; religion; national origin; ancestry or place of birth; sex; gender identity or expression; sexual orientation; disability; marital status; familial status; age (40 and older); use of guide or support animal because of blindness, deafness or physical disability.

Produced by the Office of Community Relations, 9/2016



## SAFE SLEEP

You've waited and waited for baby's arrival. Now you and all baby's caregivers want to keep baby healthy and safe while baby is awake and asleep.

First of all, make sure baby's caregiver is prepared to stay alert and be able to meet baby's needs. This can be impossible if he or she is under the influence of anything that causes drowsiness or confusion like drugs, legal or not, or alcohol.

Next, remember baby is helpless. Unlike older children, babies cannot lift their heads to breathe. They cannot untangle themselves from items that block their breathing. They cannot push an adult or older child away if they are being crushed. They cannot wiggle their way free if they are caught in a tight space.

As the parent or caregiver, it's up to you to make sure baby doesn't need to do any of these things to be safe - especially during sleep.

Choosing to give your baby a safe, risk-free, all-their-own place to sleep is very important.



Your baby is at risk when put to sleep on soft surfaces or in a seated position. Instead:

- Use a crib that meets current CPSC\* standards, with a tight-fitting, firm mattress covered by a crib-sized **fitted** sheet; or
- Use a bassinet, side sleeper or pack-and-play that contains only the mattress provided by the manufacturer.

 Dangerous sleep areas include adult beds, car seats, strollers, swings, fabric slings, infant carriers, waterbeds, air mattresses, sofas or chair cushions and piles of blankets.

Your baby is at very high risk if not always placed on his or her back to sleep. Instead:

- Place baby on back to sleep **every time** – for naps and at night.

 Baby is not more likely to choke when lying on his or her back. In fact, the choking risk might actually be lower when sleeping on the back.

Your baby is at risk when sharing a bed with an adult or older child. Instead:

- Share your room, but not your bed, with your baby.

 Bringing your baby's safe-sleep area into your room allows you to keep baby close so you know when baby needs something, while lowering the risk of accidental suffocation.

Your baby is at risk when covered by a blanket or a hat to keep warm. Instead:

- Use a one-piece sleeper (with feet, if needed).
- Always leave baby's head uncovered while sleeping.
- Snug swaddling is safe as long as baby cannot undo the wrapping.

 Dangerous warmers include blankets, loose-fitting sheets or pajamas with strings. Do not let baby overheat during sleep. If the room is comfortable for you, then it is comfortable for baby.

Your baby is at risk if other items are in the sleep area. Instead:

- Put nothing but baby in the sleep area.

 Especially dangerous things to have in the sleep area include pillows, blankets, sheepskins or bumper pads as well as soft objects, such as stuffed toys.