

Important Facts Every Caregiver of an Infant Should Know

Room sharing is a great alternative to both sleeping in separate rooms and bed sharing

Room sharing—bringing the baby's safety-approved sleep area into the parent's or caregiver's room—is a safer alternative to sleeping in separate rooms and bed sharing. It allows parent(s) or caregiver to keep their infant close to them and be aware of their needs, while decreasing the risk of S.I.D.S. or accidental suffocation.

No matter where baby sleeps, following these rules will help to reduce the risk of S.I.D.S.¹ EVERYONE who cares for baby should know and agree to follow these rules:

- Place baby on back to sleep EVERY TIME – FOR NAPS AND AT NIGHT. Risks increase dramatically if baby is not consistently placed on back for every sleep.
- Use only a firm sleep surface, such as safety-approved crib mattress, covered by a crib-sized FITTED sheet for baby's sleep area. The use of car seats, strollers, swings, fabric slings and infant carriers as locations for baby's routine sleep is strongly discouraged.
- Do *not* use pillows, loose blankets, sheepskins, or pillow-like bumpers in baby's sleep area.
- Keep soft objects, stuffed toys, loose bedding, and other items out of baby's sleep area.
- For warmth, use sleep clothing, such as a one-piece sleeper, instead of a blanket.
- Blankets are discouraged. If used, tuck the blanket under the mattress to keep it taut across baby's chest and body. Baby's feet should touch the end of the crib.
- Always leave baby's head uncovered while sleeping.
- Do *not* let baby overheat during sleep. If the room is comfortable for an adult then it is comfortable for baby.
- Do *not* let anyone smoke in the same house, car or space where baby is present.
- Offer a pacifier at nap and sleep time, but do *not* force baby to take a pacifier.
- Do *not* use home heart or breathing monitors to reduce risk of SIDS unless instructed by your baby's doctor. Talk to your health care provider if you have questions.
- Avoid products that claim to reduce risk of SIDS because most have not been tested enough to be proven to work. Talk to your health care provider if you have questions.

If you or your baby's caregiver refuses to sleep separately from baby, here are a few ADDITIONAL critical rules.²

- Remove headboards, footboards and side rails where the baby could become trapped
- Remove cords and drapes from nearby windows
- Remove any strings or ties from your and baby's pajamas
- Make sure that there are no tight spaces between the bed and the wall or furniture
- Make sure your mattress fits snugly in the bed frame (or place the mattress on the floor)
- Make sure there is nothing near the bed that could suffocate or strangle the baby
- Never put a baby to sleep alone in an adult bed
- Never let baby share a sleep area with an older child
- Never place the baby on a waterbed, sofa, soft mattress or other very soft surface
- Never allow baby to sleep with anyone who smokes, has been drinking, or has used medicines or drugs that make it hard to wake up

How to avoid flat spots on baby's head

Provide plenty of tummy time when baby is awake and someone is watching baby. Avoid too much time in car seats, carriers, bouncers. Since babies will turn their head toward sound, place the baby's feet touching the top of the bed one week and the bottom of the bed the next.

¹ Sources: S.I.D.S. of Pennsylvania 412.322.5680; Back to Sleep campaign 1.800.505. CRIB (2742); National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, January 2006; Consumer Product Safety Commission 1.800.638.2772 or www.cpsc.gov]

² Pregnancy and Newborn – March of Dimes Health Education Center www.marchofdimes.com/pnhcc/298_29656.asp