



Safe Sleeping for Babies

Anne Arundel County Department of Health
Anne Arundel County Healthy Babies Coalition



Revised 5/10

Safe Sleeping Learning Objectives

By the end of the presentation, you will know:

- What SIDS is (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).
- The major risk factors for SIDS.
- The guidelines to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- What safe and unsafe sleeping situations look like.

Overview

- SIDS definition
- Facts about SIDS
- Safe sleeping guidelines
- Other common questions

SIDS Definition

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome

- The death of an infant younger than one year of age that is unexplained even after a complete investigation.

Speaker notes:

The cause is not known.

Facts about SIDS

- ☐ SIDS is the 3rd leading cause of infant deaths.
- ☐ **Leading** cause of death in infants older than 1 month.
- ☐ About 2,500 infants die every year from SIDS in the U.S.
- ☐ Most SIDS cases happen between 2 to 4 months old.

90% of SIDS cases occur before babies are 6 months old.

SIDS in Anne Arundel County

- From 2002-2007, **33** babies died of SIDS.
- Common risks found:
 - Side or stomach positioning
 - Bed sharing
 - Sleeping on sofas or in adult beds
 - Using cribs crowded with toys & blankets
- Some babies died in other caregivers' homes.

Source: MD DHMH Vital Statistics death certificate database; FIMR case reviews.

I mention the number of deaths there were because I want people to remember that these are 33 babies who died, 33 families who are affected—some may be your friends, neighbors, co-workers, church members, etc.

Risk Factors for SIDS

- ☐ Stomach and side sleeping positions
- ☐ Smoking during pregnancy
- ☐ Exposure to smoking after birth
- ☐ Bed sharing
- ☐ Use of soft bedding (adult bed, sofas, pillows, quilts)
- ☐ Overheating
- ☐ Being born too early (premature) or low birth weight
- ☐ African-American or Native-American

Source: AAP Task Force on SIDS. Policy Statement. October 2005.


How can you lower your baby's risk of SIDS?

American Academy of Pediatrics
Guidelines



1 **Safe Sleeping Guidelines**
Put babies on their backs to sleep.

- Why is stomach sleeping risky?
 - Babies are harder to wake up.
 - Even higher risk when baby is used to back sleeping.
- Side sleeping is not safe because babies can roll onto their stomachs.



From the American Academy of Pediatrics, 2005

Speaker notes:

Many people note that babies sleep deeper when they are on their stomachs—however, for SIDS, this is not necessarily a good thing because IF they NEED to wake up (because their face is next to a blanket or pillow), they aren't able to awake.

If a baby is used to sleeping on his back at home, but then goes to a babysitter's house (ex—grandmother, friend's house) for the night and they put the baby on his stomach, he is at higher risk of dying of SIDS.

If question arises: What about when the baby gets older and rolls over on his own to sleep? Should I keep waking up to flip the baby back onto his back?

Answer: No, there is no need to wake yourself and the baby up to make sure he has not rolled onto his back. Just make sure that the baby is sleeping alone in a crib on a firm surface/mattress and that his sleep area is clear of toys, blankets, pillows or anything else.

If question arises: Side sleeping positioners that hold a baby on his side during sleep are not recommended. Many are made of soft materials (e.g. "memory foam") that pose a suffocation hazard!

2

Safe Sleeping Guidelines

Use a firm sleeping surface.

- Use a crib and a firm crib mattress.
- Use a fitted crib sheet made for the mattress.
- Do not use any extra padding under the baby.
 - Pillows
 - Comforters
 - Quilts
 - Foam padding
 - Sheepskins
- Do not let babies sleep on adult beds, waterbeds or sofas.



Speaker notes:

Some parents will use old bed sheets from adult mattresses and there is a risk of the sheets becoming loose if the baby moves around.

3

Safe Sleeping Guidelines

Keep soft objects and loose bedding out of the crib.

- ❑ Keep the crib empty.
 - Just the baby and a fitted sheet.
 - No soft quilts, comforters, pillows, foam pads, stuffed animals or plastic bags.
- ❑ Try a one-piece sleeper or sleep sack instead of a blanket.
- ❑ If using a blanket, tuck the edges under the mattress.



Speaker notes:

If using a blanket,

Put the baby near the foot of the crib like in the picture.

The top of the blanket should reach only as far as the baby's chest.

Tuck all of the edges of the blanket under the mattress so the blanket won't be loose in the crib.

Safe Sleeping Guidelines

Keep soft objects and loose bedding out of the crib.

- ❑ Bumpers are not needed!
- ❑ If used, they should be firm, thin and well-secured.



Speaker notes:

Advertisers will have you thinking that your baby “needs” all of these things for you to be a good parent, but the reality is that you don’t need to spend a hundred dollars (or more) on matching pillows, blankets, lamp shades and bumpers! In fact, these can be dangerous for your baby! Your baby really doesn’t care whether things “match”—they depend on you to be safe, cared for and loved.

(Ask people to tell you what is wrong with these pictures)

•Pillows, blanket and the bumper is too soft and “pillow-like.” These can all pose a suffocation risk. In addition, an older child can use these pillow-like bumpers as “steps” to climb out of the crib (potential falls).

4

Safe Sleeping Guidelines

Don't smoke during pregnancy.

- ❑ Don't allow smoking in the house or near the baby.
- ❑ Tobacco smoke increases risk of low birth weight and preterm birth.
- ❑ Help is available to quit smoking.
 - Anne Arundel County Department of Health
 - Learn To Live Line: 410-222-7979



5 Safe Sleeping Guidelines

Put the baby to sleep alone in her own safe crib.

- ❑ The baby should never sleep with parents (or other people) in a bed, sofa or other place.
- ❑ A separate sleeping place nearby is recommended.



No sleeping with "other people" includes other children or adults.

6

Safe Sleeping Guidelines

Avoid overheating.

- ❑ The baby can easily overheat and should be dressed lightly for sleep.
- ❑ No over-bundling!
- ❑ Try using a one-piece sleeper or a baby sleep sack.
- ❑ The room temperature should be comfortable for an adult.



Speaker notes:

Overheating can result from over-bundling (dressing baby in too many clothes, blankets, & hats for the weather/temperature) and/or the ambient temperature is too high (thermostat is set too high or the outside temperature is warm). A baby is not as able to control his/her body temperature through sweating so the adults have to make sure that the baby is at a comfortable temperature.

7 Safe Sleeping Guidelines

Try a pacifier when putting the baby down to sleep or nap.

- Decreases SIDS risk.
- If breastfeeding, wait until it has been well established, usually when the baby is one month old.
- Do not force it if the baby does not like the pacifier.
- Does not need to be reinserted if it falls out during sleep.



Speaker notes:

It is thought that a pacifier can be a helpful aid to prevent SIDS because it lowers the baby's arousal threshold, making it easier for the baby to wake himself up.

Safe Sleeping Guidelines

Do not use equipment that claim to lower the risk of SIDS.

- ❑ None have been well-tested or proven to help.
- ❑ Sleeping positioners are not necessary.
 - They are made of soft materials.
 - They have been associated with trapping babies against the crib.
- ❑ Commercial breathing or heart monitors are not useful in healthy children.*

*Note: Breathing and heart monitors should only be used under a doctor's supervision.

There are some positioners on the market that hold the baby in the side position. There is no evidence that sleep positioners lower the risk of SIDS.

Notes on Crib Safety

- **The mattress should fit tightly into the crib frame.**
 - Prevents trapping between the mattress and crib.
 - You should be able to slide only 2 fingers between the mattress and the crib.
- **The crib rails are no more than 2 3/8 inches apart.**
 - A 12 oz. soda can should not fit between the crib rails.
- **There should be no missing, loose or improperly installed screws, brackets or other hardware.**
- **Don't use older cribs with cut-outs and corner posts.**

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Office of Compliance. "Requirements for Full-Size Baby Cribs." 16 C.F.R. Part 1508.

Speaker notes:

These points are from the US Consumer Product Safety Commission and are to prevent trapping of the baby between the mattress and crib or between the crib rails. Older cribs may not meet some of the mandatory regulations that the USCPSC has put into place.

On the last point:

- Cut-outs are decorative designs that are usually cut out of the ends of older cribs—often curved shapes—that can pose an injury/strangulation hazard for infants who either get their clothing or their heads caught in the spaces.
- Corner posts on cribs also pose an injury/strangulation hazard for infants who may get their clothing caught over the post and be unable to get themselves loose.

Other Common Questions

What about flat spots on the back of the head?

- Avoid this by letting your baby play on his tummy when awake!
- Tummy time is also important to help the baby develop neck, shoulder and arm strength.



To avoid flat spots on the back of the head (medical term is “plagiocephaly”), lay the baby down on his/her back to sleep, but **NOT ALL THE TIME!!**

Make sure to give all babies time on their bellies every day when they are awake and someone is watching them. You can start this as early as in the first month or two of life.

This will make sure that the baby can develop muscle strength in his/her neck, shoulders and arms. This is important so they can learn to push themselves up, roll over, sit up, crawl and later, walk!

Other Common Questions

What about breastfeeding?

- Baby can sleep in his/her own crib near the mother for easy breastfeeding access!
- Put the baby back after the feeding.

Won't the baby choke?

- Back sleeping is less risky for choking.
- Fluids pool in the back of the throat, away from the windpipe.



Speaker notes:

This is a common question that comes from many parents. They are worried that their baby will choke on her own secretions if she's laying on her back. However, if you think about a body's anatomy, your windpipe is in FRONT and your esophagus (tube that goes down to the stomach) is in the BACK, so babies on their backs are LESS likely to choke than babies who lie on their stomachs.

Plus, there has never been any documented case that a healthy baby has choked to death while on his back. There may be some, very rare exceptions because of specific health problems, but in general, this is not a concern in a healthy baby.

Other Common Questions

I don't have a crib. Can I use a pack-n-play?

- **Absolutely!**
- **Many have a bassinette feature.**
 - Usually can use up to 15 lbs.
- **Can be used for sleeping or playing.**
 - Usually can use up to 30 lbs.
- **Portable!**
 - Easy to fold and carry.
 - Many families are on the move or there are different babysitters.





Safe Sleeping Recommendation Summary

- ✚ Put babies on their **backs to sleep**.
- ✚ Use a **firm sleeping surface**.
- ✚ **Remove all soft objects** and loose bedding from the crib.
- ✚ **Don't smoke during pregnancy** or allow smoking in the house or near the baby.
- ✚ **Avoid overheating** during sleep.
- ✚ **No bed sharing**—put the baby to sleep alone in a safe crib.
- ✚ **Try giving a pacifier** when putting the baby down to sleep or nap.
- ✚ **Do not use extra equipment** that claim to lower the risk of SIDS.

Thank you!
Remember Back to Sleep!



Any questions?



IS YOUR BABY SAFE?
 Babies die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) every year in Anne Arundel County.

3 THINGS you can do!

1. KEEP BABIES ON THEIR BACKS
2. USE A SAFE CRIB AND BEDDING
3. KEEP A SMOKE-FREE HOME

YOU CAN CHANGE IT

Get more information on safe sleeping, pregnancy and parenting. Call our helpline today for your free Healthy Pregnancy and Baby Care Kit!

877-817-TOTS(8687)

THE FAMILY TREE
TOT'S LINE

www.aahhealth.org

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY
 MARYLAND
 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**Safe Sleeping
 Every Time**

**Anne Arundel County
 Healthy Babies Coalition**