



“Deep inside you, there is a strength you may not know you possess.”

Q&A

Q I slept with my first kids, and they were fine.

A That doesn't mean an accident can't happen in the future. Think of safe sleeping like using seatbelts. You may never be in an accident, but you use your seatbelt every time so that if you are in an accident, you're as safe as possible.

Q You used to tell parents to put babies to sleep on their stomach, and now you say on their back. I'm confused.

A We've learned a lot and continue to learn a lot. When we look at a baby's anatomy alongside the current data, the facts are clear. Babies need to sleep on their back in a safe sleep space.

Q But co-bedding is done safely all around the world.

A Perhaps, but we know that in America, the adult bed is not safe for a baby, even if they are lying on it alone. Same with couches and chairs. Lay your baby on their back in a safe sleep space every time.

Q I heard safe sleep is most important for the first month of life.

A Unfortunately, most sleep related deaths occur between 2 and 7 months. Safe sleep is always important during your baby's first year of life.

Q I'm worried that if my baby sleeps on their back, they could choke on spit up.

A Your baby's windpipe is in the front of their body, so gravity keeps spit up in the digestive track. It's when babies are sleeping on their stomach that they are at risk of choking. In Hamilton County, no sleep-related deaths have been due to babies choking on spit up.



safe sleep is hard but worth it

Share the room, not
the bed. Your baby's
life is worth it.



#safesleepisworthit

What Is Safe Sleep?

Safe sleep means your baby is sleeping on his or her back on a flat, firm surface: a crib, bassinet or pack 'n play with a tight-fitting sheet. Nothing else is in the sleep space with your baby — no bumpers, blankets, pillows, stuffed animals, toys, other children or adults. Safe sleep means your baby is sleeping in the safest place you can provide. Near you but not with you.

Room-Sharing Is Safe

Lay your baby down to sleep in a bare crib, bassinet or pack 'n play right beside your bed. This keeps your bond strong, makes middle-of-the-night feedings easier and gives you peace of mind knowing your baby is close by.

Bed-Sharing Is Dangerous

Do not share a bed with your baby! More than 75% of sleep-related infant deaths happen when baby is sleeping with a family member. This includes falling asleep together on the couch or in a chair.

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Babies Died in Hamilton County
Between 2016 and 2020

Sleep-Related Deaths Are Preventable

Sleep-related deaths are the most preventable infant deaths. Every person who shares and practices safe-sleep standards has the potential to save a life.

Why Provide Safe Sleep?

Babies who sleep on their back in their own bare crib, bassinet or pack 'n play have a lower risk of accidental suffocation. Here's why:

- Babies sleeping in the nook of an arm or surrounded by soft bedding can rebreathe their own exhaled air, causing their oxygen levels to drop and carbon dioxide levels to rise. They don't always have the muscle strength to change their position in time to get fresh air.
- Babies sleeping on their stomach are also at risk for rebreathing exhaled air and are more likely to choke if they spit up. Human anatomy keeps babies safer on their back.
- Babies' windpipes are tiny and their heads are heavy. When babies sleep on an incline, like in a car seat, swing, or stroller, their heads can tip forward and create a kink in their windpipe that cuts off their air. Always move a sleeping baby to a flat, firm, safe surface.

Visit www.cradlecincinnati.org/sleep for tools, tips and ideas to help you and your family practice safe sleep with your baby.

It's one of the hardest things you'll do as a parent, but worth it when you both wake up to another day together.

When Is Safe Sleep Important?

Every time your baby sleeps. Nap time, nighttime, every time.

- Even when someone else is caring for your baby. Make sure everyone who watches your baby knows about the importance of safe sleep.
- Even when your baby is sick. When their tiny windpipe is congested, they need access to fresh air more than ever.
- Even when you think your baby would be more comfortable sleeping on their stomach. Comfortable does not equal safe.
- Even when you are breastfeeding. As soon as you are done feeding your baby, put them in a safe space for sleep.
- Even when you are traveling or don't have a permanent place to live. To receive a free portable safe sleep space for your baby, **call 211** or **email info@cradlecincinnati.org**.
- Even when you are exhausted, and it would be easier to get your baby to sleep in your arms. This is when safe sleep is most important.

“Practicing safe sleep is hard, but my baby's life is worth it”

