



What is SIDS?

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the unexplained death of an infant under 1 year of age and is the leading cause of death in infants. SIDS happens in families of all social, economic, and ethnic groups. SIDS presents no signs or symptoms and often occurs during sleep.

Other sleep-related infant deaths include:

- **Accidental suffocation:** when something, such as a pillow, covers the baby's face and nose, blocking ability to breathe
- **Accidental strangulation:** when something presses on or wraps around the baby's neck, blocking the airway
- **Accidental entrapment:** when the baby becomes trapped between two objects, such as a mattress and a wall, and cannot breathe

Recommendations to Reduce the Risk of SIDS

Get regular prenatal care during pregnancy.

Babies of mothers who do not receive regular prenatal care are at an increased risk of SIDS.

Follow guidance from your health care provider on your baby's vaccines and regular health checkups.

Vaccines not only protect baby's health, but research shows that vaccinated babies are at lower risk for SIDS.

Give your baby plenty of supervised tummy time.

This helps strengthen neck muscles and helps prevent flat spots on the head.

Breastfeed or give your baby breastmilk.

Babies who breastfeed, or are fed breastmilk, are at lower risk for SIDS than babies who were never fed breastmilk. The longer a baby is exclusively breastfed or fed breastmilk, the lower the risk.

Do not allow smoking around your baby.

Smoking in the baby's environment is a major risk factor for SIDS. Do not smoke, use marijuana or use illegal drugs during pregnancy or after baby is born. Do not drink alcohol while pregnant.

Follow safe sleep practices.

See the next page for information on safe sleep practices.

Safe Sleep Practices

Always place your baby to sleep on their back.

Babies who are used to sleeping on their backs, but who are then placed to sleep on their stomachs, like for a nap, are at a very high risk for SIDS.

Even babies who can roll back and forth should still be placed on their back to sleep but may be left if they roll to their side or stomach on their own.

Always place your baby in a crib, bassinet, or portable crib to sleep.

Cribs and sleep areas should meet safety standards of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

Do not place your baby to sleep on adult beds, waterbeds, couches, beanbag chairs, or other soft surfaces.

Do not use a car seat, stroller, swing, infant carrier, infant sling, or similar products as your baby's regular sleep area. If your baby falls asleep in one of these, they should be moved to their crib as soon as possible.



Consider using a pacifier for naps and nighttime.

Pacifiers reduce the risk of SIDS for all babies, including breastfed babies.

Do not attach the pacifier to anything—including a string, clothing, stuffed toy, or blanket—that carries a risk for suffocation, choking, or strangulation.

Don't force the baby to use it. If the pacifier falls out of baby's mouth during sleep, there is no need to put the pacifier back in.

Be safe when swaddling your baby.

Do not swaddle babies too loosely or too tightly.

Once your baby begins to roll over, they should no longer be swaddled.

Share your room, but not your bed.

Having your baby's crib in your room can make feeding, comforting, and keeping an eye on your baby easier, but your baby should not sleep in an adult bed.

Keep all soft objects out of your baby's sleep area.

Keeping items such as toys, crib bumpers, and loose bedding out of the sleep area reduces the risk of SIDS, suffocation, entrapment, and strangulation. Cover crib mattresses with a snug fitted sheet and opt for wearable blankets or swaddles instead of loose bedding.

Avoid using sleep positioners.

Sleep positioners claiming to keep your baby in a certain position or reduce the risk of SIDS should not be used. Evidence does not support the safety or effectiveness of these products.

Don't let your baby get too hot while sleeping.

Room temperature should not exceed 75°. Dress your baby in sleep clothing designed to keep them warm without over bundling or the need for loose blankets. Check for signs of overheating. If an infant appears sweaty, flushed, or their chest feels hot to the touch, adjust the room temperature and/or remove excess sleep wear.