



safe sleep

A Quick Guide for Parents and Caregivers to Keep Babies Safe and Healthy.



LONG LIVE DREAMS!



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## The Four Rules of Safe Sleep

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**SLEEP  
ALONE**



**ON  
BACK**



**EMPTY  
CRIB**



**SMOKE  
FREE**

# LONG LIVE DREAMS

## Getting ready for baby

You want to help your baby grow up strong, healthy, and safe right from the start. There is a lot you can do to make sure that happens. Here are a few simple actions:

- **PREPARE YOURSELF.** Get the right prenatal care. Eat well. Quit smoking.
- **PREPARE YOUR HOME.** Prepare for a safe sleep environment. Make it smoke-free. Only buy or use a crib/Pack 'n Play/bassinet approved by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).
- **PREPARE YOUR FAMILY.** Ask for help and support. Teach those who will care for your baby about safe sleep! Share the information in this Guidebook with EVERYONE who cares for your baby.

## Why safe sleep?

According to Delaware data, a baby dies each month in Delaware from unsafe sleep. It is easy to help your baby sleep safely, and it can save your baby's life.

African American babies are at four times greater risk for unsafe sleeping deaths, such as Sudden Unexplained Infant Death (SUID).



## Before baby comes home: safe cribs.

- Not all cribs are safe. Only buy or use a crib/Pack 'n Play/bassinet approved by the CPSC ([www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)).
- Follow the assembly instructions carefully.
- Make sure every part is installed properly. If you have any questions, call the manufacturer.
- Use a firm baby mattress that has been specifically designed for your crib with a fitted sheet.
- Make sure there is not more than two fingers' space (2  $\frac{3}{8}$  inches) between the mattress and the side of the crib and any point.
- A soda can should not be able to fit through the slats at any point.

## Know these rules of safe sleep:



# Step 1: Make sure your baby always sleeps alone in a safe crib.

Safe sleep starts with your baby sleeping alone *for every sleep*. Many of the infant deaths in Delaware last year happened when a baby was bed sharing with someone else.

Babies should always sleep alone in a safe crib — **NEVER** in a bed with anyone or anything, not even for naps.

- In a bed, someone can roll on top of a baby and cause suffocation. The risk of death to your baby is even higher if you bed share and are very tired, or under the influence of alcohol or illegal or prescription drugs that make you sleepy.
- Babies can also become trapped between the sleeping surface and the body of the adult or a wall.
- Adult beds also contain soft bedding material, which is dangerous for infants. Other unsafe sleeping surfaces include sofas, armchairs, recliners, air mattresses, and memory foam.
- Pediatricians agree that babies are safest when they sleep alone in a CPSC approved crib, Pack 'n Play, or bassinet.

Share the room but not a bed. Your baby can sleep in the same room as you, as long as they are in their own crib. Put the crib next to an adult bed. Babies need a separate space to sleep but can be near you to support breastfeeding. Breastfeeding your baby for at least six months can protect the baby against SUID, but protection goes away if you bed share.



## Step 2: Babies should ALWAYS sleep on their back.

Experts agree that babies should always sleep on their back, even for naps. Remember, back to sleep *for every sleep*. Research has shown that back sleeping greatly decreases the risk of sleep-related causes of infant death, like SUID. Babies who sleep on their back get more oxygen and are far less likely to suffocate.

Newborns get into the habit of sleeping the way they are first placed, so start with back sleep from birth. As your baby gets older, they will roll over by themselves — usually at 4 to 5 months of age. When this happens, you do not need to reposition them.

Babies should never sleep on their tummy. But supervised tummy time is encouraged and starts when your baby comes home with you from the hospital. Help your baby's muscles grow by giving them *supervised* play time on their tummy every day.



## Step 3: There should be nothing else in the crib with your baby.

Toys and stuffed animals are cute, but they should never share a crib with your baby. Babies should always sleep on a firm baby mattress, with **NOTHING** else in the crib.

Don't put pillows, quilts, comforters, blankets, stuffed animals, or other items in the crib. Wedges, positioners, and bumper pads should not be used in cribs either. There is no evidence that bumper pads prevent injuries, and there is a potential risk of suffocation, strangulation, or becoming trapped.

Sleep positioners or rolled-up blankets present a suffocation risk and are not needed to keep your baby on their back.

Use only a fitted sheet that has been specifically made for the crib to cover the mattress. Blankets are not recommended. Dress your baby in light sleep clothing, such as a one-piece sleeper or sleep sack.



## Step 4: Babies should always sleep in a smoke-free environment.

You already know that secondhand smoke is harmful to adults. But, it's even more dangerous for babies. This isn't only limited to cigarette smoke, either. Any kind of smoke can be a health risk for babies.

Exposure to the nicotine in cigarette smoke when you are pregnant can hurt your baby. After birth, studies have shown that babies who are exposed to secondhand smoke are two to three times more likely to die from SUID and other sleep related deaths.

To avoid these and other potential health issues associated with smoking, your baby should always sleep in a smoke-free environment. Make sure that everyone who will be caring for your infant does not smoke and that they create a smoke-free zone for the baby.

If you smoke and would like help quitting, please visit [hss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/dpc/quit\\_tips.html](https://hss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/dpc/quit_tips.html).





## Other health and safety tips for baby.

The four rules of safe sleep are a big step toward keeping babies safe and healthy.



Make sure everyone who cares for your baby knows them! Here are a few more things you can do:

- Place your baby's crib away from windows, curtains, blind cords, lamps, and electrical plugs — and out of reach of small objects.
- Keep the room temperature comfortable for you, which should be comfortable for your baby too. Overheating is a risk factor for SUID.
- Consider offering a pacifier once breastfeeding is established.

**For a full list of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Safe Sleep guidelines, please refer to the next page, or dial 2-1-1 for Help Me Grow.**

## Reduce the Risk of SUIDS and Other Sleep-Related Causes of Infant Death

1. Always place your baby on their back to sleep, for naps and at night, to reduce the risk of SUID.
  2. Use a firm sleep surface, covered by a fitted sheet, to reduce the risk of SUID and other sleep-related causes of infant death.
  3. Your baby should not sleep in an adult bed, on a couch, or on a chair alone, with you, or with anyone else.
  4. Keep soft objects, toys, and loose bedding out of your baby's sleep area to reduce the risk of SUID and other sleep-related causes of infant death.
  5. To reduce the risk of SUID, women should:  
Get regular health care checkups during pregnancy, and should not smoke, drink alcohol, or use illegal drugs during pregnancy or after the baby is born.
  6. To reduce the risk of SUID, do not smoke during pregnancy, and do not smoke or allow smoking around your baby.
  7. Breastfeed your baby to reduce the risk of SUID.
  8. Give your baby a dry pacifier that is not attached to a string, for naps and at night, to reduce the risk of SUID.
  9. Do not let your baby get too hot during sleep.
  10. Follow health care provider guidance on your baby's vaccines and regular health checkups.
  11. Avoid products that claim to reduce the risk of SUID and other sleep-related causes of infant death.
  12. Do not use home heart or breathing monitors to reduce the risk of SUID.
  13. Give your baby plenty of tummy time when they are awake and when someone is watching.
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**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON SAFE SLEEP,  
call 2-1-1 for Help Me Grow for information,  
help, resources, and more!**