

Safe Infant Sleep Basics Podcast

Becoming a parent is a wonderful time full of excitement and joy. But it can also be a time of worry because there is so much to remember about caring for your infant. From your neighbor describing which diapers work best to someone in the grocery store telling you which baby food to buy, everyone has their own ideas about how to be a good parent. Sleep can be one of the biggest challenges for new parents and their infants. One of the most important decisions a new parent makes is where and how he or she places a baby to sleep. In between all of the advice from family and friends, it is important to get the basics straight, especially when it comes to keeping your baby safe while sleeping.

Below are some easy to follow guidelines from medical experts to help ensure safe sleep. The goal of these guidelines is simple: to decrease your child's risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

1. Be sure you have the proper gear. Your crib should have a safety-approved crib with a firm mattress and a well-fitted sheet. Do not put babies to sleep on adult beds, water beds, sofas, or chairs.
2. Keep the crib clear of anything that may interfere with your baby's breathing. This includes soft bedding, toys, stuffed animals, bottles, pillows, or anything else that might cover your child's face and obstruct his or her breathing.
3. Place your baby to sleep on his or her back. Whether it's for a quick nap or for the entire night, babies must be placed on their backs at all times. Even if you believe your baby sleeps more soundly on his or her stomach, it is not safe.
4. Do not sleep with your baby. Be aware of your own personal level of alertness while caring for your infant. As tempting as it may be to fall asleep with your baby next to you — especially if you are up in the middle of the night feeding — it is important that you place your baby back in his or her own sleeping space.
5. Do not overdress your baby. Use only enough clothing to keep your baby warm without having to use covers.
6. Give your baby supervised tummy time. Tummy time helps build the shoulder and neck muscles that enable babies to roll over and move around on their own.
7. Educate others who care for your baby by sharing these guidelines with relatives, friends, babysitters, and any other caregivers.

The military has great resources designed especially for new parents. Contact your local New Parent Support Program or, if you are not near a military installation, your state's Joint Family Support Assistance Program. For contact information, call Military OneSource at 1-800-342-9647, that's 1-800-342-9647. Remember, safe sleep can save lives.