

# Keeping Your Baby Safe During Sleep

(NAPSA)—Key ways to help keep your baby safe while sleeping.

## The Problem

Nearly 4,000 infants die each year suddenly and without warning. Babies can unexpectedly stop breathing. These deaths can happen during a nap or at nighttime. Sometimes the cause of death is known, such as accidental suffocation. But, sometimes the cause is not known. Some infant deaths are determined to be Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), which is when an infant under 1 year of age dies and the sudden death is still unexplained after a thorough case investigation (a complete autopsy, a full examination of the death scene, and a review of the infant's and family's health history).

## What To Do?

As a parent or caregiver, these are the key ways you can help keep your baby safe during sleep:

- Always place your baby on his or her back to sleep, for naps and at night.

- Put your baby in a separate sleep area but in the same room where you sleep. Your baby should sleep in a safety-approved crib\*, bassinet, or portable play yard.

- Use a firm sleep surface, such as a mattress in a safety-approved crib\*, covered by a fitted sheet. Remove crib bumpers, blankets, quilts, soft objects, and toys from the crib.

- Breastfeed your baby to reduce the risk for SIDS.

- Do not smoke or allow anyone to smoke around your baby.

## Your Questions Answered

Experts at the National Institutes of Health answer your questions about keeping your baby safe while asleep.

## Are babies more likely to spit up and choke on their backs?

No. Healthy babies naturally swallow or cough up fluids. In fact, babies may actually clear fluids better when on their back.

## What if my baby rolls onto his stomach during sleep? Do I



**The safest way for a baby to sleep is on her back in a safety-approved crib\*, bassinet, or portable play yard next to where the parents sleep.**

## need to put him in the back sleep position again?

No. Rolling over is an important and natural part of your baby's growth. Most babies start rolling over on their own at 4 to 6 months of age. If your baby rolls over on his own during sleep, you do not need to turn him over onto his back. The important thing is that your baby starts every sleep time on his back to reduce the risk of SIDS.

## What if my baby's grandparents or another caregiver wants to place my baby to sleep on her stomach for naptime?

Babies who usually sleep on their backs, but who are then placed to sleep on their stomach, such as for a nap, are at HIGHER risk for SIDS. So it is important for EVERYONE who cares for your baby to use the back sleep position for all sleep times—for naps and at night.

## Learn More

The *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's (NICHD) Safe to Sleep® campaign educates parents and caregivers about keeping babies safe while asleep. Learn more at <http://safetosleep.nichd.nih.gov/>.

\*For more information on crib safety, contact the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772 or <http://www.cpsc.gov>.