

## Safe Sleep

### *Protecting your baby during sleep*

*Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)* and other sudden, unexpected infant deaths can occur in the first year of life. Follow these safe sleep rules to give your baby the best chance to stay safe during sleep.

### “ABCs” of Safe Sleep

The “ABCs” of safe sleep are that babies should always sleep:

- **ALONE**
- On their **BACK**
- In a **CRIB**

#### Alone

- The safest place for your baby to sleep is **near** your bed, but in your baby’s own “sleep space” (a crib or bassinet). Babies who share a bed with an adult or another child increase their risk of SIDS, suffocation, and accidental death.
- When you share a room with your baby, with your baby’s sleep space near you, you can easily comfort or feed your baby as needed.
- It is dangerous to fall asleep with your baby on the couch or in an armchair. If you are sleepy, put your baby in a safe sleep space.

#### Back

- **Always** put your baby on their back to sleep, even for a short nap. Side and tummy positions are not safe. Your baby is **not** more likely to *aspirate* (suck fluid into their windpipe) lying on their back.

#### Crib

- Use a crib that meets safety standards. The mattress should be firm and fit snugly in the crib. Use only a tight-fitting crib sheet.
- Do not use wedges or positioners to prop your baby.



*Babies should always sleep alone, on their back, and in a crib.*

- Your baby should never sleep on top of a soft surface, such as an adult bed, sofa, pillow, or comforters. Car seats, swings, and baby carriers are **not** safe sleep spaces.
- Decorate your baby’s room, but not your baby’s crib. It is not safe to put anything soft, loose, or fluffy in your baby’s crib. This includes stuffed toys, pillows, bumpers, loose blankets, quilts, hats, and bibs.
- Make sure your baby does not get too warm during sleep. Dress your baby in light sleep clothing, such as would be comfortable for a lightly-clothed adult.
- Consider using a wearable blanket sleeper instead of loose blankets. Loose blankets can cover a baby’s face and cause problems with breathing.

### **More Important Safety Tips**

- Teach everyone who cares for your baby about these safe sleep rules.
- Make sure no one smokes around your baby.
- Remember that:
  - Breastfeeding lowers your baby’s risk for SIDS.
  - Immunizations may lower the risk of SIDS.
  - Giving your baby a pacifier at sleep times can lower the risk of SIDS. But, if you are nursing, wait until you and your baby have been breastfeeding well for about 1 month before giving your baby a pacifier.
- When your baby is awake and being watched, give lots of tummy time. This will help make your baby’s arm muscles strong, and prevent flat spots on the back of the head.

Resources: NANN’s “A Parent’s Guide to a Safe Sleep Environment” and the First Candle website ([www.firstcandle.org](http://www.firstcandle.org))

### **Questions?**

Your questions are important. Talk with a member of your baby’s healthcare team if you have questions or concerns.

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit:  
206.598.4606