

# SAFE SLEEP FOR YOUR GRANDBABY

Reduce the Risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and Other Sleep-Related Causes of Instant Death



## What is SIDS?

SIDS is the sudden, unexplained death of a baby younger than 1 year of age that doesn't have a known cause even after a complete investigation.

Each year in the United States, thousands of babies die suddenly and unexpectedly. These deaths are called SUID (pronounced SOO-idd), which stands for "Sudden Unexpected Infant Death."

### Fast Facts about SIDS:

- SIDS is the leading cause of death in babies 1 month to 1 year of age.
- Most SIDS deaths happen when babies are between 1 month and 4 months of age.

SUID includes all unexpected deaths: those without a clear cause, such as SIDS, and those from a known cause, such as suffocation.

Sleep-related causes of infant death are those linked to how or where a baby sleeps or slept. They are due to accidental causes, such as: suffocation; entrapment, when baby gets trapped between two objects, such as a mattress and wall, and can't breathe; or strangulation, when something presses or wraps around a baby's neck, blocking the baby's airway. These deaths are not SIDS.

As a grandparent, you play an important role in reducing your grandbaby's risk of SIDS and other sleep-related causes of infant death.

## What should I know about SIDS?

### We have made great progress in reducing SIDS

Since awareness campaigns that stressed back sleeping for babies started in 1994, the SIDS rate in the United States has dropped by 50 percent. This decreased rate equals thousands of babies' lives and is a result of parents and caregivers placing babies on their backs to sleeps.



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- Infant deaths from unsafe sleep is 70 times more likely than infant death from a motor vehicle accident.
- Bed-sharing was involved in over half of the sleep-related deaths in Kentucky in 2013. Bed-sharing is dangerous and these deaths are preventable.
- **Babies sleep safest on their backs.** Babies who sleep on their backs are much less likely to die of SIDS than babies who sleep on their stomachs or sides.
- **Every sleep time counts.** Babies should sleep on their backs for all sleep times—for naps and at night. Babies who are used to sleeping on their backs but who are then placed on their stomachs to sleep, like for a nap, are at very high risk for SIDS. Because of this added risk, make sure that you place your grandbaby on his or her back to sleep for all sleep times—including naps.
- **Sleep surface matters.** Babies who sleep on a soft surface, such as an adult bed, or under a soft covering, such as a soft blanket or quilt, are more likely to die of SIDS or suffocation.

## What can I do?

There is no sure way to prevent SIDS, but grandparents, parents, and caregivers can take these steps to reduce the risk of SIDS and sleep-related causes of infant death:

- The back sleep position is the safest position for all babies, including preterm babies. Keep in mind that every sleep time counts.
- Room sharing—keeping a baby's sleep area in the same room where parents sleep—reduces the risk of SIDS and sleep-related causes of infant death. The baby should not sleep in an adult bed, on a couch, or on a chair alone, with you, or with anyone else. If parents bring a baby into bed to feed, they should make sure to put him or her back in a separate sleep area, such as a safety-approved\* crib, bassinet, or pack & play area in their room next to where they sleep when finished.

This is what a safe sleep environment looks like. The baby's sleep area has no bumpers, pillows, blankets, or toys and is next to where the parents sleep.

- Use a firm sleep surface, such as a mattress in a safety-approved\* crib, covered by a fitted sheet, to reduce the risk of SIDS and other sleep-related causes of infant death. Firm sleep surfaces can include safety approved\* cribs, bassinets, and pack & plays. Do not use a car seat, carrier, swing, or similar product as baby's everyday sleep area. Never place baby to sleep on soft surfaces, such as on a couch or sofa, pillows, quilts, sheepskins, or blankets.
- Keep soft objects, toys, crib bumpers, and loose bedding out of your grandbaby's sleep area to reduce the risk of SIDS and sleep-related causes of infant death. Don't use pillows, blankets, quilts, sheepskins, or crib bumpers anywhere in your grandbaby's sleep area. Evidence does not support using crib bumpers to prevent injury. In fact, crib bumpers can cause serious injuries and even death. Keeping them out of the sleep area is the best way to avoid these dangers.
- Offer your grandbaby a dry pacifier that is not attached to a string for naps and at night to reduce the risk of SIDS. If the pacifier falls out of the baby's mouth during sleep, there is no need to put the pacifier back in. Wait until the baby is used to breastfeeding before trying a pacifier.
- Do not let your grandbaby get too hot during sleep. Dress your grandbaby in no more than one layer more of clothing than an adult would wear to be comfortable. Keep the room at a temperature that is comfortable for an adult.
- Follow health care provider guidance on the baby's vaccines and regular health checkups.
- Avoid products that claim to reduce the risk of SIDS and sleep-related causes of infant death. These wedges, positioners, and other products have not been tested for safety or effectiveness.
- Do not use home heart or breathing monitors to reduce the risk of SIDS. If you have questions about using these monitors for other health conditions, talk with the baby's health care provider.
- Give your grandbaby plenty of Tummy Time when he or she is awake and when someone is watching. Supervised Tummy Time helps your grandbaby's neck, shoulder, and arm muscles get stronger. It also helps to prevent flat spots on the back of your grandbaby's head. Holding a baby upright and limiting time in carriers and bouncers can also help prevent flat spots on the back of a baby's head.

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

- Grandparents' homes can have additional or unintentional dangers for infants. Help protect your grandchild by providing a Safe Sleep environment for him or her. Make sure that you have a Safe Sleep Space for your grandchild to sleep in. If you do not have a crib for your grandchild, you can check with Cribs for Kids at [www.cribsforkids.org/find-a-chapter/](http://www.cribsforkids.org/find-a-chapter/) or call your local health department.
- If you have a crib but are unsure of its safety, visit the Crib Information Center at [www.cpsc.gov/cribs](http://www.cpsc.gov/cribs)
- Consuming alcohol or drugs, smoking, or taking medications (both prescription and over-the-counter) can cause impairment and create a dangerous sleep environment for any infant in your care. Always follow the ABC's closely; babies sleep Alone, on their Back and in a clean clear Crib. Keep all medications locked up, including both prescription and over-the-counter.

## What can mom do?

To reduce the risk of SIDS, women should:

- Get regular health care during pregnancy.
- Don't smoke, drink alcohol, or use illegal drugs during pregnancy or after the baby is born.
- To reduce the risk of SIDS, women should not smoke during pregnancy, and you should not smoke or allow smoking around your grandbaby.
- Moms should breastfeed their baby to reduce the risk of SIDS. Breastfeeding has many health benefits for mother and baby.

## Spread the word!

Make sure everyone who cares for your grandbaby knows the ways to reduce the risk of SIDS and sleep related causes of infant death. Remember: babies sleep safest on their backs, and every sleep time counts!

Help family members, babysitters, daycare workers—EVERYONE—reduce your grandbaby's risk of SIDS and ensure a safe sleep area for your grandbaby. Share these Safe Sleep messages with everyone who cares for your grandbaby or for any baby younger than 1 year of age.



For more information about SIDS and the Safe Sleep KY Campaign, visit:

**SafeSleepKY.org**

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