

Caring for Young Infants: Safe Sleep Messages and Safe Sleep Practices

1. Place babies on their back to sleep.
2. Sleep environment
 - a. A sleep environment separate from, but close to the parents is recommended.
 - b. Place a crib, bassinet or cradle that meets safety standards **near the parent's bed**
 - c. Maintain a smoke free environment.
 - d. **Never** smoke around a baby.
 - e. Do not put the baby to sleep on an adult bed or sofa.
 - f. Never let a baby fall asleep with someone who is smoking, tired or ill, has taken medication for pain, drugs, alcohol or substances that cause drowsiness, or is extremely overweight.
3. Infant sleep space
 - a. Use a crib that meets the current safety standards (2 3/8 inch openings).
 - b. Do not put the baby to sleep on an adult bed or sofa.
 - c. Keep the crib free of soft objects such as pillows, comforters, soft bedding, or stuffed animals.
 - d. Do not bundle the baby too tightly in heavy blankets or clothing.
 - e. The bedroom temperature should be kept comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
 - f. Keep the head and face uncovered.
 - g. Use a one-piece sleeper/suit.
 - h. If a blanket is used, it should only reach as far as the baby's chest.
4. The breastfeeding baby
 - a. Babies may be brought into bed for breastfeeding or comforting, but should be returned to the crib/bassinet when the parent is ready to sleep.
5. Pacifier use
 - a. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies be offered a pacifier at naptime and bedtime.
 - b. Do not reinsert the pacifier if the baby refuses it or falls asleep.
 - c. Do not coat the pacifier with anything sweet. The pacifier should be cleaned regularly.
 - d. Delay pacifier use until after 1 month of age if the baby is breastfeeding.
6. Encouraging infant development and preventing a flat head (positional plagiocephaly, brachycephaly)
 - a. Encourage "tummy time" when the baby is awake and observed by an adult. This will encourage motor development.
 - b. Alter the head position during sleep (place the baby with the head to one side for one week and then change to the other the following week). This will help reduce the risk of the baby developing a flat area on the back of the head.