

# Sleep Safely Baby

McKenzie Pediatrics

You may decide to have your baby sleep in bed with you, in a bassinet, or in a crib. It is your choice, as long as you follow certain basic guidelines to ensure your baby's safety. What position you put your baby in to sleep is important, especially if he is younger than 6 months and unable to move his head if something interferes with his breathing.

Always place your baby on his back on the mattress. This position has been shown to decrease the risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome), where a healthy baby dies in his or her sleep for no apparent reason. SIDS is very unusual to begin with, and you can further reduce your child's risk by remembering the following:

- Never put your baby to sleep on her stomach until she at least 6 months old and has full head control and is able to roll
- Never put her to sleep on a soft surface at any age
- Never put soft quilts, blankets, pillows, or comforters underneath your baby
- Never smoke, especially in the home with a baby

If you choose to have your baby sleep in a bassinet or a crib, you should:

- Use a firm, flat mattress
- Make sure the railings on the crib are no more than 2 3/8 inches apart. Some older cribs are not safe because the railings are too far apart and could allow your baby's head to become trapped.
- Remove any soft pillows or objects, such as stuffed animals, that could suffocate your baby
- Check that the mattress fits snugly against the sides of the bassinet or the railings of the crib so your baby's head cannot be trapped between the mattress and the sides
- Remove any decorative trimmings on the crib in which your baby's clothing could be caught
- Remove hanging toys, mobiles, and rattles when your baby can begin to sit up (around 6 months)
- Lower the level of the mattress and remove bumper pads when your baby can pull himself to a standing position, usually around 7 to 9 months, so he will not be able to climb out of the crib
- Avoid loose bedding

If you choose to have your baby sleep with you, you should:

- Use a VERY firm mattress
- Never sleep on a water mattress
- Never sleep on an egg-crate mattress, or foam mattress pad
- Never use alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes. Babies of mothers who smoke have an increased risk of dying of SIDS. Parents who have been using drugs or alcohol can roll over on their babies and suffocate them.

- Never sleep with your baby if you are on prescription medications that induce sleep. Your ability to wake to the baby having difficulty breathing will be reduced. You can also roll over on your baby and suffocate them.
- Do not sleep in a bed with a railing or headboard. Your baby's head could become trapped between the mattress and the railing or headboard.
- Do not place your baby directly against the wall, since your baby's head could become trapped between the bed's mattress and the wall.
- Do not use heavy, bulky blankets in your bed.
- Do not sleep on a couch with your baby.
- Do not allow your infant to sleep with other children.

Thank you for reading. Please call our office if you have any further questions.