

EMPOWR (Empowering Mothers
to Parent and Overcome with Resilience)
Patient Health Communication Series

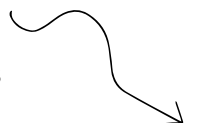


SIDS FAQ

Safe Baby Sleep Guide

There are actions that you and your loved ones can take to help your baby sleep safely and to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related causes of infant death. The term "SIDS" may sound scary, but there are many ways that families can lower potential risks while giving the best care possible. Learning about SIDS and safe sleep is important for families and all caregivers—anyone else who might help you care for your babies.

SIDS Facts, Risk Factors, Safe Baby Sleep, Resources





Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Facts

SIDS is the sudden, unexplained death of a baby younger than one year that may not have a known cause even after a complete investigation. When a baby dies, medical providers, law enforcement, and communities try to find out why.

If they can't find a cause for the death, and if the baby was younger than one year old, the medical examiner or coroner will call the death SIDS. If there is still uncertainty as to the cause after it is determined to be unexplained, the medical examiner or coroner might leave the cause of death as "unknown."

A

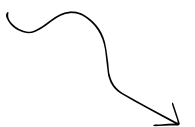
SIDS is a sudden and silent medical disorder that can happen to a baby who seems healthy. It is sometimes called "crib death" because it is associated with the time when the baby is sleeping. Cribs themselves don't cause SIDS, but the baby's sleep environment can influence sleep-related causes of death.

B

SIDS is the leading cause of death among babies between one month and one year of age.

C

The majority of SIDS deaths happen before a baby reaches six months of age. However, SIDS deaths can happen any time during a baby's first year.



SIDS Risk Factors

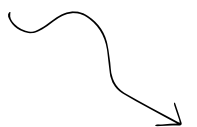
Any baby placed on their stomach or side to sleep increases the risk of SIDS. *Know the ABCs of safe baby sleep:*

- A: Baby should always sleep alone.
- B: Baby should always sleep on their back.
- C: Baby should always sleep in a crib.

In Order to Reverse Risk of SIDS...

- Have baby sleep on their back.
- Do not have baby sleep on soft surfaces, such as an adult mattress, couch, or chair or under soft coverings.
- Do not have baby sleep on or under soft or loose bedding. There should not be any extra bedding or plushies in bed.
- Baby should be dressed in one more layer than what parents are comfortable in (if you're wearing a short-sleeve shirt, baby should be dressed in a long-sleeve shirt; a good rule of thumb is that baby should be dressed in one more clothing layer than parents).
- Baby shouldn't be exposed to cigarette smoke in the womb or in their environment, such as at home or in a car.
Please see our Smoking and Breastfeeding: Harm Reduction Patient Health Communication.
- Baby should never sleep in an adult bed.

**SIDS and Other Sleep-Related Causes of Infant Death:
Risk Reduction**



SIDS Risk Reduction

The back sleep position is the safest position for all babies until they are one year old. Babies who are used to sleeping on their backs, but who are then placed to sleep on their stomachs, are at very high risk for SIDS. If your baby rolls over on their own from back to stomach or stomach to back, there is no need to reposition the baby. Starting sleep on the back is most important for reducing SIDS risk. Premies (infants born preterm) should be placed on their backs to sleep as soon as possible after birth. Further, if your baby has started to roll on their stomach, no apparatuses should be used; avoid all infant sleep positioners/anti-roll products.

[fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/do-not-use-infant-sleep-positioners-due-risk-suffocation](https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/do-not-use-infant-sleep-positioners-due-risk-suffocation)

Never place your baby to sleep on soft surfaces, such as on a couch, sofa, waterbed, pillow, quilt, sheepskin, or blanket. These surfaces can be very dangerous for babies. Do not use a car seat, stroller, swing, infant carrier, infant sling, or similar products as your baby's regular sleep area.

Evidence does not support using crib bumpers to prevent injury. Crib bumpers can cause serious injuries and even death.

Following these recommendations reduces the risk of SIDS and death or injury from suffocation, entrapment, and strangulation.

**A crib, bassinet, portable crib, or play yard that follows the safety standards of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is recommended. For information, contact the CPSC at 1.800.638.2772 or [cpsc.gov](https://www.cpsc.gov)*

Additional SIDS Risk Reduction Recommendations

Breastfeeding has many health benefits for you and your baby. Babies who breastfeed, or who are fed breast milk, are at lower risk for SIDS than babies who were never fed breast milk. Increased duration of breastfeeding reduces the risk of SIDS.

If you bring your baby into your bed for feeding, put them back in a separate sleep area when finished. This sleep area should be made for infants, like a crib or bassinet, and close to your bed. If you fall asleep while feeding or comforting your baby in your bed, place them back in a separate sleep area as soon as you wake up. Evidence shows that the longer a caregiver and infant bed share, the higher the risk for sleep-related causes of infant death. *Breastfeeding information is available at [cdc.gov/breastfeeding/faq/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/faq/index.htm)*

Consider giving your baby a pacifier for naps and nighttime sleep to reduce the risk of SIDS. Do not attach the pacifier to anything such as a pacifier clip, stuffed toy, or blanket that carries a risk for choking, suffocation, or strangulation. Wait until breastfeeding is established—often by 3 to 4 weeks—before offering a pacifier. Or, if you are not breastfeeding, offer the pacifier as soon as you want. If the pacifier falls out of your baby's mouth during sleep, there is no need to put the pacifier back in. Pacifiers reduce the risk of SIDS for all babies, including breastfed babies.

Keep your baby's face and head uncovered during sleep.

Follow your health care provider's guidance on your baby's vaccines and regular health checkups. Vaccines not only protect your baby's health, but research shows that vaccinated babies are at lower risk for SIDS.



The Importance of "Tummy Time" for Your Baby

Tummy time describes the times when you place your baby on their stomach while your baby is awake and someone is watching. It is an important part of your baby's normal growth.

Supervised tummy time while your baby is awake helps strengthen your baby's neck, shoulder, and arm muscles.

Limit your baby's time spent in car seats (once your baby has been removed from a vehicle, public transportation, etc. after travel) and change the direction your baby lays in the sleep area from week to week.

Suggestions to Help You and Baby Enjoy Tummy Time

- Spread a blanket in a clear area of the floor for tummy time.
- Try short tummy time sessions after a diaper change or after your baby wakes from a nap.
- Put a toy within your baby's reach during tummy time to help your baby learn to interact with their surroundings.
- Ask someone whom you trust to sit in front of your baby during tummy time to encourage interaction and bonding.
- As your baby gets older, tummy time sessions can last longer and be more frequent throughout the day.

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

The Cooper University Health Care Center for Healing EMPOWER Program combines compassionate, innovative medical and behavioral health care through a centering model for pregnant and parenting women experiencing substance use. An interdisciplinary team focuses on providing evidence-based, family-centered treatment, education, and support through a harm reduction lens that is inclusive, non-judgmental, and promotes dignity for all women.

cooperhealth.org/recovery

Call to schedule an appointment: 856.342.3040

Find Medicaid Obstetricians/Gynecologists (OBGYNs) in New Jersey: *doctor.com/NJ/Medicaid-Obstetricians--Gynecologists-OBGYNs-New-Jersey*

The New Jersey Department of Health Healthy Women, Healthy Families Initiative works toward improving maternal and infant health outcomes for women of and their families, while reducing racial, ethnic, and economic disparities in those outcomes through a community-driven approach through Community Health Workers and Central Intake Hubs.

nj.gov/health/fhs/maternalchild/hwhf

Cribs for Kids is a safe-sleep education program to help reduce the risk of injury and death of infants due to unsafe sleep environments. *cribsforkids.org*

The Sudden Unexplained Death In Childhood (SUDC) Foundation provides resources and promotes awareness of SUDC in communities. *sudc.org/literature-brochures*

Developed by the Cooper University Health Care Center for Healing (cooperhealth.org/recovery)