

SLEEP BABY SAFELY KEY CAMPAIGN MESSAGING

OVERARCHING CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

- There are a million ways to raise babies but only one way to lay them down to sleep safely. Protect babies from suffocation—every night, every nap, every time.
- Every month, a healthy baby in Pinellas County suffocates while sleeping unsafely. 100% of these deaths could have been prevented. Don't risk it! Protect babies from suffocation—every night, every nap, every time.

SAFE SLEEP TIPS

Follow Safe Sleep ABCs: ALONE, BACK, CRIB.

Always put babies to sleep alone on their back in an empty crib, bassinet, or Pack n' Play. Remove all items from crib (i.e. blankets, pillows, stuffed animals, and bumper pads) and use only a firm mattress and tight-fitting sheet. Use a one-piece sleeper or sleep sack to keep baby warm instead of loose blankets.

Share a Room, Not a Bed. Bring crib into parent's room for baby's 1st year – room sharing keeps baby close without the risks. Never put baby to sleep on soft surfaces like adult beds, couches, futons, recliners, or air mattresses.

Stay Alert While Feeding. Set an alarm and always return baby to crib after feeding. Breastfeed if possible – it's best for baby's protection. Do not smoke or allow others to smoke around baby, and avoid misuse of alcohol or drugs.

SAFE SLEEP FACTS

Suffocation from unsafe sleep is the #1 cause of preventable death for children under 18. As many children die from unsafe sleep suffocation before their 1st birthday as die in the next 17 years from all other preventable causes combined. In the past 10 years, 102 babies in Pinellas County have suffocated while sleeping unsafely – that's about 6 kindergarten classrooms of children!

More infants die in adult beds than anywhere else. Two-thirds of infant sleep-related deaths happened when parents shared a bed with their baby (co-sleeping). Infants are 40x more likely to die in adult beds than in their own cribs. Other soft surfaces like couches, futons, recliners, and air mattresses pose suffocation risks as well.

The cause of death is suffocation—not SIDS. The District Six Medical Examiner has not determined a cause of death as SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) in over 17 years. SIDS denotes the cause of death is unknown. However, when a healthy baby dies a sleep-related death, we know the cause of death is frequently suffocation or overlay from co-sleeping. Knowing this fact, we can protect babies from suffocation by always practicing safe sleep.

The first year of a baby's life is critical. Sleep-related suffocation deaths generally happen in baby's 1st year – most within the first 8 months. At birth, babies have heavy heads and weak neck muscles; this makes it difficult for them to lift their heads to breathe freely if airways are blocked. While babies develop differently, most can lift their heads at 4 months – and by 5 or 6 months, have mastered head control and can roll over in both directions due to stronger neck and arm muscles.

Sleeping babies on their back is safest. Some parents worry that babies will choke when on their backs but their airway anatomy and gag reflex prevents this. When babies sleep on their backs, the trachea (windpipe) lies on top of the esophagus, so gravity stops spit-up from getting into the windpipe. Babies who sleep on their backs are less likely to choke and less likely to have their airways (breathing) blocked.

What's comfy for adults can be deadly for babies.

Things that adults find comfy for sleeping—such as memory foam, pillow-top mattresses, down comforters, and pillows—can cause babies to suffocate. That's why we stress never to sleep with your baby or lay them down to sleep on an adult bed or other soft surface. We also stress keeping baby's crib empty of blankets, pillows, stuffed animals, and bumper pads, using nothing but a firm mattress and tight-fitting sheet.

We know more today than we ever have. As more information becomes available, we must learn from the past and change old practices and beliefs to keep babies safe while sleeping. We changed our habits about car seats; today they are proven life savers and most parents wouldn't risk driving baby without one – even if they've never had an accident. Using this same logic, let's make safe sleep for infants as common a safety practice as car seats.



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