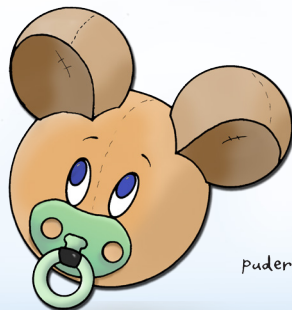
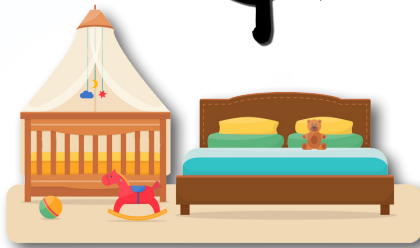


# The Safe Sleep Campaign for Babies

## "Back to Sleep and Tummy for Play"

The American Academy of Pediatrics has recently updated safe sleep guidelines for infants and we wanted to summarize it for you. In 1992 the AAP first recommended that all babies should be placed on their backs to sleep and SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) has declined dramatically. But sleep related deaths from other causes such as suffocation and entrapment have increased. So here are the top ten points to give your baby a safe sleeping environment:



by Doug Puder, MD

**1.** Always position your baby on the back for **every** sleep until age one. Side sleeping is not safe! The back position does not increase the risk of choking, even for those babies who have reflux (GERD). But if an older infant rolls over on their stomach on their own, they can remain in that position or however they are comfortable.

**2.** Use a firm sleeping surface! Generally a firm mattress which does not indent or mold to a baby's head. Use a fitted sheet but no other bedding or soft objects in the crib. No pillows! Soft mattresses and bedding increase a baby's risk of suffocation.

Use a crib, bassinet, or portable crib which is approved by the *Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)*. Bedrails must be spaced less than 2<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" apart and the mattress should fit snugly. Avoid old cribs with missing parts or hardware which can be dangerous.

Car seats and infant swings are not recommended for a baby's routine sleeping. The baby should sleep in their crib, not your bed!

**3.** Breastfeed if possible. It decreases the risk of SIDS, especially during the first 6 months. (see our article on Breastfeeding online)

**4.** Infants should sleep in the parent's **room** (not their **bed**) for the first six months of life. This can reduce the risk of SIDS by 50%!

Parents may consider keeping a baby in their room until age one. Infants who are brought into a parent's bed/armchair/couch for feeding should be returned to their own crib when the parent gets sleepy.

**5.** Keep soft objects and loose bedding away from the infant's sleep area. Infant sleep clothing such as a wearable blanket are preferred. Avoid crib bumpers or wedges.

**6.** Consider a pacifier at nap and bedtime after your baby is two weeks old. It has a protective effect against SIDS in the first six months. Pacifiers do not need to be reinserted once the infant falls asleep to get this protection. Don't force a baby to take a pacifier if they refuse it. Don't hang a pacifier around an infant's (or child's) neck.

**7.** Avoid smoke exposure during pregnancy and afterwards!

**8.** SIDS is more likely in babies whose parents abuse alcohol or illicit drugs either during pregnancy or afterwards. (No amount of alcohol is safe during pregnancy.)

**9.** Avoid overheating. An overly warm bedroom increases a baby's risk of SIDS. Don't increase the bedroom temperature for the baby.

**10.** Tummy time while your baby is awake can prevent flattening of the head. "Back to sleep, tummy for play". (see next page)