Newborn Sleep

HealthySteps®
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SAFE SLEEP SUGGESTIONS

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has guidelines for safe sleeping practices. They recommend that babies under 6 months old (and preferably up to 1 year old) sleep in the same room as their parents, but in their own bed. This advice is part of an effort to reduce sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Research shows that sharing a room, but not a bed, with parents can reduce SIDS by up to 50%.

Other AAP suggestions for reducing the risk of SIDS:

- Put babies to sleep on their backs.
- Avoid cigarette, alcohol, and drug use during pregnancy and after baby is born.
- Do not put pillows, blankets, or sleep positioners in the crib. Same for bumpers and stuffed animals.
- Use infant zip-up sleepers instead of blankets.
- Breastfeed.
- Use a pacifier (once breastfeeding is well established).
- Follow the vaccine schedule.

The AAP recommends that babies sleep in a crib, bassinet, or a portable crib or play yard that meets the safety standards of the Consumer Product Safety Commission near (but not in) the parents' bed. The AAP acknowledges that caregivers often nurse their babies in bed and fall asleep accidentally. However, it is less safe to fall asleep with baby in an upright position (rocking chair) or on a couch. Ensure that adult beds meet the following suggestions:

- Use a mattress that is firm and flat.
- Place baby so they cannot fall out of the bed or slip between a mattress and wall or headboard.
- Don't use blankets and pillows near baby.
- Don't overdress baby or put a hat on them, and keep the room cool.

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The AAP recommends caregivers to not share a bed with baby if *anyone* in the bed is overweight, snores, or is a heavy sleeper. Babies should never share a bed with adults who have consumed any alcohol, mind-altering substances, or narcotics. Babies should not be in bed with adults who use medications or substances that make them tired. Even over the counter medicines can be a problem. *Adults can suffocate babies without realizing it.*

HOW CAN I HELP MY BABY SETTLE DOWN IN THE EVENING?

At the end of the day everyone is ready to wind down. This is a great time for routines. The evening routine you create for your baby will provide a sense of comfort and security as they grow.

You can tell your baby is tired if they seem irritable. Sometimes their eyes are glazed or they're yawning. Another sign is if their skin is flushed or blotchy. Some babies rub their eyes or face with their fists when they're tired. Others won't make eye contact or smile.

WAYS TO HELP BABIES WIND DOWN:

- A slower pace to activities.
- Snuggles, hugs, and kisses.
- A shared story or book.
- Low lighting or a night light.
- Talking and singing softly.
- Turn off screens.
- Playing soothing music at a low volume.
- Rocking them.
- Give them a bath (see *Bath Time* article).

Routines are enjoyable and soothing for you and your baby. They help your child learn the order of activities and prepare for what will happen next. You can change routines as your child grows and develops, or as your needs change.

SCAN FOR MORE INFO

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