

**I**t's hard to imagine that being close to your baby can be a danger.

But when it comes to sleep, babies need room to breathe. Placing your baby in a safe, empty crib can minimize the risk of serious harm.

*No place is completely free from risk, but using a safe crib can reduce those risks.*

*'Protecting America's Infants, Safe Sleep Practices and the Hazards of the Adult Bed, (SIDS Alliance).*

*This brochure is produced by the Department of Job and Family Services, Juvenile Court, and the Family and Children First Council.*



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# Sweet Dreams

## Safety for your Sleeping Baby



## What are the dangers of sleeping with my baby?

Experts agree that sharing a bed, couch or chair to sleep with your baby can be risky. For example, sleeping with your child can increase the chances that:

- You could roll onto and suffocate your baby
- Your baby could roll off the bed and get hurt
- Your baby could be trapped in a headboard, footboard or railings
- Your baby could be trapped between the bed and wall, or between the bed and another object

Safe sleeping helps prevent accidental infant deaths – and the safest place is in a safety-approved crib.<sup>1</sup>

## What should I do?

Your baby's safety should be your first priority. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Do use a safety approved crib to place your baby to sleep
- Do put your baby on his/her back.
- Do place your baby on a firm mattress (unless your doctor tells you otherwise).
- Do check corner hooks regularly underneath the crib to be sure the mattress is secure
- Do use a thin blanket to keep your baby warm, or dress your baby in a sleeper.
- Do tuck the blanket around the crib's mattress and pull it up only as far as the baby's chest.
- Do keep the room warm enough that you or any adult can wear light clothing.



- Do place your baby on his/her stomach while awake and while you are there to watch him/her.
- Some experts also suggest placing your baby's feet at the foot of the crib when you put him or her down to sleep. This can keep a blanket from covering the baby's face.

## What shouldn't I do?

- Do not put your child to sleep on a couch, recliner, cushion or pillow.
- Do not put your baby to sleep on his/her stomach. It can increase the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Do not put any soft bedding under a sleeping baby.
- Do not place your baby in an adult bed alone or with other children or pets.
- Do not sleep with your baby if you are overtired.
- Do not sleep with your baby if you have been drinking or if you have used drugs (including illegal and prescription drugs).
- Do not smoke around your baby. Babies exposed to smoke are harder to wake up. Smoking also increases the risk of SIDS when infants share a bed with mothers who smoke.

## What is a "safe" baby bed?

Whether you place a crib in your room or in the baby's room, it should be a safe crib with:

- Proper railings – they should be spaced far enough apart so that a pop can cannot fit through them (no more than 2 3/8 inches apart)
- A firm mattress that fits snugly in the frame
- A fitted sheet that holds tightly around the mattress
- No quilts, duvets, heavy blankets, stuffed animals, bumper pads, etc.
- Safe crib alternatives to consider include placing a firm mattress on the floor and in the center of a room, away from the walls.
- You might also find a bed that can attach to the side of your own bed.

(visit <http://pregnancyandbaby.com/read/articles/179.htm> for more tips on finding a safe crib).

## What if I have more questions?

You can call any of these agencies to find out more about safe sleeping for your baby:

- **Help Me Grow** (513) 281-4769
- **Healthy Moms & Babies** (513) 591-5600
- **Every Child Succeeds** (513) 636-7385
- **Lighthouse Youth Services** (513) 221-3350
- **Family & Children First Council** (513) 946-4990
- **United Way Help Line** 2-1-1

Visit the Hamilton County Job and Family Services Web site at [www.hcjfs.org](http://www.hcjfs.org)