

Keeping Babies Safe While They Sleep

It doesn't happen often. But once in a while, we hear about a baby who seems perfectly healthy when they are put down for a nap, who never wakes up. Infant deaths are particularly tragic for all involved. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) claims many lives; accidents claim more.



Here are some guidelines for keeping baby safe.

- ♥ Infants and adults need different sleeping spaces; resist the urge to let baby sleep in bed with you
- ♥ Put babies on their backs to sleep. It reduces the risk of suffocation
- ♥ Avoid placing babies on comforters, regular beds, soft couches, or near pillows; if they can't lift their heads they may suffocate
- ♥ Stuffed animals are cuddly and cute – but they can pose a suffocation risk, too

So where should babies sleep? In a cradle or crib, that meets all of the current safety guidelines. There should be:

- ♥ A firm, tight fitting mattress so baby cannot get trapped between the mattress and the crib
- ♥ No missing, loose, or improperly installed screws, brackets or other hardware on the crib or mattress support
- ♥ No more than 2 3/8 inches (about the width of a soda can) between crib slats with no missing slats so baby's head can not slip through
- ♥ No cut outs in the headboard or footboard for the same reason
- ♥ A crib that does not have a drop down side

For portable cribs that have mesh siding, look for

- ♥ Mesh less than 1/4 inch in size (smaller than the tiny buttons on a baby's clothing)
- ♥ Mesh with no tears or holes that could entrap or entangle the baby
- ♥ Mesh that is securely attached at both the top and bottom

- ♥ A top rail cover with no tears or holes

What should be in the crib?

- ♥ A tight fitting bottom sheet with baby on top, laying on his/her back
- ♥ No bumpers, stuffed toys, loose blankets or pillows
- ♥ If a blanket is needed, use a thin blanket and tuck it in under the crib mattress and cover the baby only as high as his chest
- ♥ Consider using a sleeper to eliminate the risk posed by a blanket

Where should the crib be placed?

- ♥ Out of reach of windows and curtains
- ♥ Away from any kind of wire (for a lamp, for example) or blind pull – anything that could potentially pose a threat of choking

These guidelines are based on regulations from the Consumer Product Safety Commission, which went into effect on June 28, 2011. All cribs produced since then must meet these requirements. Cribs used by childcare providers must meet these standards by 12/28/12.

Many people have older cribs that they pass down to other family members or friends when their children outgrow them. It is important to keep the new safety standards in mind when someone offers you a previously used crib or you buy one at a garage sale. The crib needs to be sturdy and safe, with no missing screws. If the crib sides go down, contact the manufacturer to see if they offer a “fix” that keeps the crib side up. Go online to get the manufacturer’s instructions regarding how to put the crib together, and then follow them.

For more information go to: www.cpsc.gov/CPSC/PUBS/5030.html OR <http://cribsafety.jpma.org/>

Keep your babies safe; they depend on you!