

SLEEP SAFETY

Please click on any of the links below to go directly to your specified topic within this document.

- [Crib Next to the Adult's Bed](#)
- [Sudden Infant Death Syndrome \(SIDS\)](#)
- [Safe Sleep for your Baby](#)
- [Items in the Crib](#)
- [Bed-Sharing \(Co-Sleeping\)](#)
- [Room Temperature](#)
- [What Your Baby Should Wear To Bed](#)
- [Sleepwear Safety Checklist](#)
- [Safe Sleep Resources](#)

Perhaps the only time you'll leave your young children unattended is while they are sleeping. The important factor is to make sure your sleeping children are where they will be safe and comfortable. Please share this information with all family, friends, and other child care providers who may care for your baby to ensure they follow safe sleep practices.

The Golden Rules:

Here are some of the most important things for parents and caregivers to know about children's safety when sleeping:

- ➡ The safest place for an unsupervised baby to sleep is alone in a crib that meets current safety regulations. For the first six months, it is recommended you place your baby's crib in your bedroom.
- ➡ Never let infants sleep on standard beds, waterbeds, air mattresses, futons, sofas, armchairs, or in cribs with soft bedding, bumper pads, stuffed toys or pillows.
- ➡ Creating a safe sleep environment for your infants will help them sleep safely and reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Babies who sleep on their back have a reduced risk of SIDS. Since the launch of the 'Back to Sleep' campaign in Canada in 1999, the number of babies placed to sleep on their back has increased dramatically, and the rate of SIDS has dropped by more than 50 percent.
- ➡ Newborn babies tend to get in the habit of sleeping the way they are first placed, so start putting your baby on his or her back right from birth. Sleep 'positioners' or rolled up blankets present a risk of suffocation and are not needed to help your baby sleep on his or her back.



- ➔ Provide a smoke-free environment for your child both day and night.
- ➔ Products such as carriages, strollers, car seats, infant swings, bouncers or playpens are not intended for infant sleep and should not be used for extended periods.
- ➔ Do not allow your baby to sleep in an upright or semi-upright position -- when asleep his or her head can fall forward and make breathing difficult.

Crib Next to the Adult's Bed

Research has shown that *room sharing* is associated with a reduced risk of SIDS, and is recommended until your baby is at least six months old. Room sharing means placing your baby to sleep in a crib within arm's reach of where you sleep. This may mean putting your baby's crib next to your bed in your room, or putting a mattress next to his or her crib in your baby's room. If your room is too small for a crib, use a cradle that meets current Canadian safety regulations. Move your baby to a crib once they reach the maximum weight that is set by the manufacturer or your baby can sit up by themselves, whichever comes first.



Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)



On May 17, 2012, it was reported that the Child Health Organization 'SIDS and Kids' have drafted a new recommendation to their set of guidelines to reduce SIDS.

Jeanine Young, Adjunct Professor with the National Scientific Advisory Group (NSAG) suggested that studies carried out for the past 15 years prove breastfeeding reduces the risk of SIDS by half a margin.

"We have now reached a point where conclusive evidence from numerous studies demonstrates breast milk can reduce sudden and unexpected death in infancy," she said. She added that mothers who could not breastfeed should avoid other risk factors like smoking near babies and sleeping babies on their side or stomach.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) refers to the sudden and unexpected death of an apparently healthy infant, when the cause of death remains unexplained even after a full investigation. SIDS occurs rapidly and silently, usually during periods of sleep (hence the common reference to 'crib death'). Despite years of international research, SIDS cannot be

predicted. In Canada, SIDS is the leading cause of infant death; for every 1,400 live births, one infant dies of SIDS.

A baby who usually sleeps on his/her back but is then placed on its stomach to sleep, is at a much higher risk of SIDS. For this reason, it is important for everyone who cares for your baby, such as babysitters and grandparents to use the 'back sleep position'. As your baby gets older, he/she will be able to turn over onto his/her stomach by themselves, usually at about 5 months. When this happens, you do not have to reposition your baby.

Additional information and resources on SIDS and Safe Sleep Practices

 [The Canadian Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths \(CFSID\) \(External link\)](#)

Toll Free: 1-800-363-7437

Email: sidsinfo@sidscanada.org

To Reduce the Risk:

- ➔ SIDS is less common in babies who sleep on their back. Put your baby to sleep on his/her back on a firm surface. Some babies must sleep on their tummy – ask your doctor. When the baby is awake and being watched some 'tummy time' is necessary for the baby's development.
- ➔ Babies need to be warm, but they should not become too hot. Use light weight blankets that you can add or take away according to the room temperature.
- ➔ Breastfeeding is the best way to feed your baby.
- ➔ Breastfeeding has many benefits and may give some protection against SIDS.
- ➔ Supervised tummy time during playtime is also important to your baby's healthy muscle development.
- ➔ Putting the crib next to your bed makes it easier to breastfeed at night. Some research has shown that breastfeeding reduces the risk of SIDS.



Safe Sleep for Your Baby

The [Safe Sleep for Your Baby](#) brochure provides parents and caregivers with up to date information on how to create safe sleeping environments for infants.

Joint Statement on Safe Sleep: Preventing Sudden Infant Deaths in Canada

The [Joint Statement on Safe Sleep](#) provides health practitioners with current evidence so they may offer parents and caregivers information and support, and raise awareness of sudden infant deaths and safe sleeping practices.

A Collaborative Effort

The Joint Statement on Safe Sleep: Preventing Sudden Infant Deaths in Canada has been developed in collaboration with North American experts in the field of sudden infant deaths, the [Canadian Paediatric Society](#), the [Canadian Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths](#), the [Canadian Institute of Child Health](#), [Health Canada](#), and the Public Health Agency of Canada, with input from provincial/territorial, national, and regional public health stakeholders from across the country.

The above information was resourced from [Public Health Agency of Canada](#).

Items in the Crib

Bumper pads, quilts and stuffed toys can cause suffocation. Anything placed in a crib may reduce the flow of oxygen to your baby and increase the risk of suffocation. Keep the sleeping area clear. Always read the instructions that come with children's products and check regularly for product recalls.



- Use a crib that has no toys or loose bedding.
- Use a crib that meets current Canadian safety regulations.
- Only use a crib that has a label or sticker with a date of manufacture after September 1986.
- Check regularly to ensure that the crib's hardware is securely fastened and not damaged.
- The mattress supplied with the crib should be no thicker than 15 cm (6 in) and must fit snugly.
- Place the crib away from windows, curtains, blind cords, lamps, electrical plugs, extension cords, and out of reach of small objects.
- Other than a firm mattress and a fitted sheet, there is no need for any extra items in the crib – no toys, no blankets, no pillows, no rolled towels, and no bumper pads.
- Instead of a blanket, use light sleeping clothing for your baby, such as a one-piece sleeper. Blankets can be dangerous if your baby's head becomes covered when he or she is asleep.

Bed Sharing (Co-Sleeping)

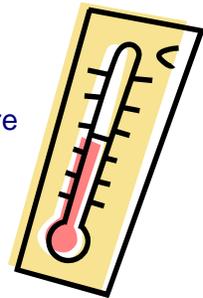
Bed sharing is described as a child and an adult sharing a sleeping surface (bed, couch, futon, beanbag, recliner, armchair, air mattress, or memory foam) with an infant. There is no evidence to suggest bed sharing reduces the risk of SIDS -- and in fact can pose other dangers. Risks to your infant include:

- ➔ Becoming trapped between your body and the sleeping surface, a wall or other object
- ➔ the parent, caregiver or another child rolls over onto the baby
- ➔ Falling from an elevated surface
- ➔ Suffocating on soft bedding material such as pillows or comforters
- ➔ The risk of death is even higher for your baby if the person sharing the same sleep surface with him/her is a smoker, very tired, or under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or medications that makes them sleepy. Room sharing is a safe alternative to bed sharing.



Room Temperature

- ➔ Overheating can be a risk for SIDS.
- ➔ Your baby should be lightly clothed for sleep, and the bedroom temperature should be kept comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
- ➔ If the room temperature is comfortable for you, then it is also comfortable for your baby.
- ➔ Putting the crib next to your bed makes it easier to breastfeed at night. Some research has shown that breastfeeding reduces the risk of SIDS.



What Your Baby Should Wear to Bed

Before 1987, children in Canada suffered severe burns when their sleepwear caught fire. Since 1987, revised government safety standards have made children's sleepwear much safer due to the stricter safety regulations for loose-fitting sleepwear. Dress your infant in actual sleepwear when putting him/her to bed. Most day clothes do not meet Health Canada's flammability requirements for sleepwear.

Be careful when using loose-fitting cotton and cotton-related sleepwear for children. These fabrics catch fire and burn more quickly than most synthetics. Nylon and polyester are more difficult to set on fire and burn more slowly. In general, snug-fitting sleepwear is best.

Sleepwear Safety Checklist:

- ➔ Loose, baggy sleepwear can catch fire more easily than snug-fitting sleepwear.
- ➔ Whether you purchase or make your own sleepwear for children choose styles that are snug fitting, especially for cotton or cotton blends.
- ➔ Loose garments such as nightgowns, bathrobes, baby doll pajamas, and loose pajamas burn more easily if made of cotton or cotton blends. These garments should be made of polyester, nylon or polyester/nylon blends to meet the flammability requirements.
- ➔ Never let children sleep in baggy T-shirts and adult sleepwear because these products can catch fire more easily. Also, a child is more prone to trip in oversized clothing.
- ➔ Avoid or remove drawstrings and cords as children can strangle or fall if these items are caught around the neck or on other objects.
- ➔ Check sleepwear regularly for loose threads, snaps and buttons.
- ➔ Always supervise children around fireplaces, burning candles, campfires, etc. when they are wearing sleepwear.

Safe Sleep Resources - Promotional items

- Handout and door hanger entitled [A Baby's Safe Sleep Environment](#)
- For information about these items please [contact us](#).
- For additional information, visit our [Resources](#) pages.