



Safe Sleeping Habits

Many parents have questions about their new baby and how to keep him or her safe. When it comes to your baby's sleeping safety, you can find vast amounts of information about safeness and risks associated with sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and sudden unexpected infant death (SUID).

Ages 0 – 12 Months

Below are recommendations to keep your baby safe from the day he or she comes home until his or her 1st birthday. During this time, your baby's sleep practices will change, so you'll want to make sure you're updating your safety habits accordingly.



Room Sharing



According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, your baby's sleep area should be in the same room where you sleep for the first 6 months or, ideally, for the first year.



Room sharing can decrease the risk of SIDS and SUID by as much as 50%. Your child should sleep in a crib or bassinet. The crib or bassinet should be covered with a fitted sheet and should not have a bumper pad, blankets, pillows, or toys in it. Do not share a bed with your new baby as this could result in suffocation for your child.

Baby Room Safety



A crib, bassinet, portable crib, or play yard that follows the safety standards of the Consumer Product Safety Commission is recommended for safe infant sleep.



Do not place blankets in the baby's crib or on top of the baby. Keep your baby warm by using the appropriate weight sleep wear.



Keep the baby's crib free of all small objects that could be swallowed.



Do not let strings or cords dangle anywhere near the crib.



Remove any teething necklaces from the baby's neck prior to sleeping.



Be sure to choose a sturdy changing table with a 2-inch guardrail around all four sides to prevent falls. **Never leave your baby alone while he or she is on the changing table!**

Co-Sleeping



Your baby should always sleep alone in his or her crib or bassinet—no siblings or pets should be in the crib with him or her.



Only bring your baby into your bed to feed or comfort him or her. If you begin to feel tired or the baby falls asleep, put him or her in his or her own bed.



Never place your baby on a couch, sofa, armchair, or on top of an adult to sleep due to the risk of suffocation or falling.



Safety Alert!

In the United States, approximately 3,500 infants die annually from SIDS and SUID. Until your baby reaches his or her 1st birthday, remain cautious and vigilant.



Ages 1–3 Years

Toddlers are very curious. You might find that your child is climbing, or attempting to climb, out of his or her bed at night, which can be dangerous. If you have lowered your child's crib and he or she is still maneuvering around the raised rails, it is probably time for a “big-kid” bed.

Crib-to-Bed Transition

This transition can be difficult, but adjustment or change can keep your child safe, especially if he or she is climbing out of the crib!



If your child tends to be active in his or her sleep, you might look at toddler beds that are lower to the ground and have guard rails. Using this type of bed may prevent falls.



If possible, avoid bunk beds. Even if your toddler intends to sleep on the bottom bunk, he or she might be tempted to climb to the top!



To make the transition a bit smoother, try removing the crib, and position the new bed in that vacant spot. Falling asleep and waking up to familiar sights in your child's room will help provide your toddler with a sense of comfort and familiarity. In addition, you could add new paint, wallpaper, or decorations (this does not need to be a big or expensive project) to help your child feel like a “big” kid.

References:

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2019). *Make baby's room safe: Parent checklist*. <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Make-Babys-Room-Safe.aspx>

St. Louis Children's Hospital. (n.d.). *Tackling the toddler crib-to-bed transition* [Resource Page]. <https://www.stlouischildrens.org/health-resources/pulse/tackling-toddler-crib-bed-transition>

Task Force on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. (2016). SIDS and other sleep-related infant deaths: Updated 2016 recommendations for a safe infant sleeping environment. *American Academy of Pediatrics*, 138(5), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2016-2938>