

An expert's guide to safe sleeping for your baby

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(HealthDay)—To keep your baby safe while sleeping, experts

recommend practicing the "ABCs" of sleep.

Babies should sleep **alone**, on their **back** and in a **crib**. That's the best way to prevent sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

SIDS is the unexplained death of a child under 1 year of age that usually occurs during sleep. The United States has about 3,500 sleep-related deaths a year among babies, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"Some causes of SIDS include overheating, strangulation and suffocation. Sharing a bed with someone, even a mother or twin, can increase the risk of these problems," said Dr. Eustratia Hubbard, medical director of newborn services at University of California, San Diego Health.

"Placing babies on their sides or stomachs also increases the chances of SIDS," Hubbard explained in a university news release. "Parents and caregivers sometimes worry that if a baby spits up while laying on her back during sleep, she will aspirate. But babies have reflexes to protect their airway, including gagging, coughing and turning their heads to the side, so on the back is always best."

Besides the ABCs of sleep, other [safety measures](#) for your baby include using a firm mattress in a safety-approved crib with only a fitted sheet—no loose or rolled blankets, pillows, positioners, bumper pads or soft toys.

In addition, keep your baby in a room with you (but in a separate bed) until he or she is at least 6 months old, breastfeed your baby, and do not smoke or allow smoking around your baby.

More information: The U.S. National Library of Medicine has more

on [SIDS](#).

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