



**Texas Children's  
Hospital**  
Center for Childhood  
Injury Prevention

# Crib Safety & Preventing SIDS

Everything you need to know to keep your kids safe from crib injuries and SIDS.

Unintentional suffocation is the leading cause of injury death among children less than 1 in the United States, accounting for nearly 1,000 infant deaths annually.

## Tips for choosing a crib

Buying a new crib ensures that your child has the safest crib available. However, if you are getting a used crib, be sure to check carefully that:

- It has not been recalled ([www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)).
- It should not have cutout areas on the headboard or footboard.
- No missing, loose, splintered or cracked slats.
- Slats are 2-3/8 inches apart or less so a soda can will not fit through.
- The mattress fits snugly against the frame. It should allow no more than two fingers between the edge of the mattress and the crib side.
- There are no sharp corners, jagged edges or projections, such as posts that could catch the baby's clothing. Posts should be 1/16 of an inch high or less.

- Regularly check the crib's hardware to make sure screws or bolts holding the crib together are tight and not missing.



## Preparing the crib for your baby

- Place the crib at least two feet away from heating vents, windows, window-blind cords, drapery or wall lamps and one foot from walls and furniture.
- Cover the mattress with a snug-fitting crib sheet with elastic corners and nothing more.

## In the crib

- Do not use pillows, blankets, bumpers, stuffed animals in the crib. Keep plastic bags, strings and balloons away from the crib.



## Once your child is able to push up on his or her hands:

- Remove crib gyms, decorations, or mobiles that hang across the crib.

## What is Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)?

SIDS is the unexplained death of a seemingly healthy baby in their sleep for no apparent reason. We don't know what causes SIDS but all babies are vulnerable. We do know that SIDS is not contagious or hereditary.



## Factors that may contribute to SIDS deaths:

- Prematurity or low birth weight
- Co-sleeping with parents or siblings
- Sleeping on the tummy or side
- Loose bedding or pillows or sleeping on a pillow or other soft mattress.
- Sleeping on cushioned furniture. Babies could smother against sofa cushions or against the body of an exhausted parent.
- Living in homes where smoking is allowed.
- Being over-bundled or sleeping in an overly warm place. Your baby should be warm, but not sweating or hot to the touch



## Tips for safer sleep

- Always place your baby on their back to sleep
- Your baby should sleep alone in a crib at all times, even for short naps.
- Share a room not a bed. Keep your child's crib in the room for the first six months of life.
- Keep soft toys and loose bedding out of the crib.
- Use sleep sacks and wearable blankets to keep the baby warm instead of blankets, comforters or quilts.
- Don't use wedges or positioners in the crib.

## Common questions

### Is there a risk of choking when my baby sleeps on his or her back?

No, unless there is a physical disability or health condition where your child's pediatrician requires a modified sleep position.

### Should my baby use a pacifier?

Once breastfeeding is properly established, (around 1 month), using a pacifier while sleeping is recommended.

### Can my baby share a bed with his or her brother or sister?

Bed-sharing with other children, including brothers and sisters, is unsafe for your baby. It increases the risk for SIDS as well as for suffocation for babies under the age of 1.

### Will my baby get "flat spots" on his or her head from back sleeping?

For the most part, flat spots on the back of the baby's head go away a few months after the baby learns to sit up. You also can reduce flat spots by placing your baby on the tummy while he or she is awake.

According to the CDC, About 4,000 infants (less than one year of age) die suddenly and unexpectedly each year in the United States.

