

# GUIDE FOR PARENTS

**RAINBOW PEDIATRICS**  
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## How to help your baby sleep safely

You may decide to have your baby sleep in bed with you, or in a crib. It is your choice, as long as you follow certain basic guidelines to ensure your baby's safety. What position you put your baby in to sleep is important, especially if he is younger than 6 months and unable to move his head if something interferes with his breathing. Always place your baby on his back on the mattress. This position has been shown to decrease the risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome), where a healthy baby dies in his or her sleep for no apparent reason. SIDS is very unusual to begin with, and you can further reduce your child's risk by remembering the following:

- \* Never put your baby to sleep on her stomach
- \* Never put her to sleep on a soft surface
- \* Never put soft quilts, blankets, pillows or comforters underneath your baby
- \* Never smoke

### **If your baby sleeps in a crib**

If you choose to have your baby sleep in a bassinet or crib you should:

- \* Use a firm, flat mattress
- \* Make sure the railings on the crib are no more than 2 3/8 inches apart. Some older cribs are not safe because the railings are too far apart and could allow your baby's head to become trapped
- \* Remove any soft pillows or objects that could suffocate your baby
- \* Check that the mattress fits tightly against the sides of the bassinet or the railings of the crib so your baby's head cannot be trapped between the mattress and the sides.
- \* Remove hanging toys, mobiles, and rattles when your baby can begin to sit up (around 5 to 6 months)
- \* Lower the level of mattress and remove bumper pads when your baby can pull himself to a standing position, so he will not be able to climb out of the crib
- \* Avoid loose bedding

### **If your baby shares a bed with you**

If you choose to have your child sleep with you follow these guidelines:

- \* Use a very firm mattress
- \* Never sleep on a water mattress
- \* Never use alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes. Babies of mothers who smoke have an increased risk of dying of SIDS. Parents who have been using alcohol or drugs can roll on their babies and suffocate them.
- \* Do not sleep in a bed with a railing or headboard. Your baby's head could be trapped between the bed's mattress and the wall
- \* Do not use heavy, bulky blankets in your bed
- \* Do not sleep on the couch with your baby
- \* Do not allow your infant to sleep with other children