

## GUIDE FOR PARENTS

### How to help your baby sleep safely

You may decide to have your baby sleep in bed with you, in a bassinet, 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  $2\frac{3}{8}$  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 any decorative trimmings on the crib in which your baby's clothing could be caught
- Remove hanging toys, mobiles, and rattles when your baby can begin to sit up (around 5 to 6 months)
- Lower the level of the 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 over 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 mattress and the railing or headboard
- Do not place your bed directly against the wall, since your baby's head could become trapped between the bed's mattress and the wall
- Do not use heavy, bulky blankets in your bed
- Do not sleep on a couch with your baby
- Do not allow your infant to sleep with other children.

## **Crib sheets focus on safety**

An estimated 900 infant deaths a year are linked to soft bedding, according to the American Society for Testing and Materials; sheets of all types, but particularly cheaper ones after washing, have been implicated. Patented Stayput safety sheets (designed by a mother whose son suffocated after becoming entangled in a loose crib sheet) fit standard mattresses (28" x 52", 5" to 6" deep). The sheets slide over the mattress like a pillowcase and are fitted with a flap at one end that is secured with a Velcro strap hidden beneath the mattress. Standard 100% cotton sheets are available in eight colors; flannel sheets of 50% cotton, 50% polyester are available in white and beige. For information, call 877-278-2978 or visit [www.babysheets.com](http://www.babysheets.com). (The manufacturer reports that a percentage of revenue from the sale of Stayput sheets is contributed to J. R. CRIBS [Crib Regulations and Infant Bedding Safety] Foundation.)