

Keeping baby safe at home, tips for parents and caregivers of NICU graduates



The rule is easy
"Stomach To Play and Back To Sleep"
for your baby's healthy development and to reduce the risk of SIDS



Congratulations on the birth of your baby!

These past weeks or months may have felt like an emotional roller-coaster ride since your baby arrived.

Now that your baby's health has improved, leaving the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit and going home is a time of joy and anticipation.

Every parent worries about SIDS or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, also known as "crib death."

What is SIDS?

SIDS is the unexpected death of a seemingly healthy infant under one year of age, for whom no cause of death can be found. A SIDS diagnosis is based on an autopsy, an investigation of the place where a baby died, and a review of the baby's health history.

What causes SIDS?

The causes of SIDS are not clearly understood. Researchers believe there is an underlying medical cause. They are studying babies' development, genetics, and surroundings to find the answers.

SIDS is not suffocation. The baby's crib does not cause SIDS, but you will find that it is important to create a safe sleeping place for your baby.

We hope this information and these safety tips will help ease your worries about SIDS.



Is your baby at risk for SIDS?

Being born too early and too small (with a low birthweight) does increase a baby's risk of SIDS. That is why it is important for you to know about SIDS and how to reduce the chance of it happening.

Helping keep baby safe

"Stomach to Play...Back To Sleep"

In the NICU while your baby was on the monitor, he or she may have slept on the stomach, side or back depending on medical



needs. When your baby is ready for discharge, the transition from hospital to home may include changing how the baby sleeps.

Putting your healthy baby on the “back to sleep” is one of the most important steps you can take to lower the risk of SIDS when you take your baby home.

Putting an awake baby on the “stomach to play” promotes healthy development. It helps your baby's neck, arm, and shoulder muscles grow stronger. “Tummy time” allows your awake baby to get exercise and explore the world.



When should your baby make

Before your baby is discharged from the hospital, talk to your baby's primary nurse and the doctor about which sleep position is best for your baby.

- Find out if your baby should sleep in a special position for medical reasons.



Simple steps can help low

Safe sleeping tips

- **Be consistent. Place a healthy baby on the back to sleep for naps and at night.**
- **Let others know that your baby always sleeps on the back.**
 - Tell the grandparents, baby sitters, nannies and child care providers.
- **Do not sleep with the baby.**
 - It is not safe to sleep with the baby in the parent's bed or on a sofa.
 - Sleeping with a baby may cause the baby to overheat; blankets, pillows, or sofa cushions could block a baby's airways; or an adult could roll over onto the baby.
 - To keep a close watch over baby and for bonding, the baby can sleep in a safety-approved crib or bassinet in the parent's room.

the change to back sleeping?



- If your baby goes home with a monitor and/or oxygen, ask about how the baby should sleep and how to keep your baby comfortable and safe at home.
- Ask if the NICU staff will help your baby make a change from side or stomach sleeping to back sleeping before discharge.

er your baby's risk of SIDS

- **Do not let anyone smoke near your baby.**
 - Keep cigarette and cigar smoke out of your home and car.
 - Avoid taking the baby to places where people are smoking.
- **Keep your baby from getting too hot or overheating.**
 - Dress the baby in layers. Remove the layers if the baby becomes flushed or sweaty.
 - Do not over-bundle or over-wrap the baby.
 - Do not cover baby's face with blankets.
 - Set the room thermostat to 68° to 72° F, if possible.

A good rule of thumb is that a room temperature comfortable to you is comfortable for the baby.

Create a safe sleeping place

Your baby's risk of SIDS goes down when you provide a safe, smoke-free place for your baby to sleep.

- The crib mattress should be firm.
- Keep fluffy blankets, comforters, quilts, pillows, stuffed animals, and toys out of the crib when baby is sleeping.
- Wedges and bumper pads are not needed.
- Do not place your baby to sleep on a chair, sofa, pillow or waterbed.
- Babies should not sleep in the bed with brothers or sisters.



The rule is easy

"Stomach to Play and Back To Sleep"

for your baby's healthy development and to reduce the risk of SIDS

*Welcome your new baby home
and enjoy!*



To learn more

Call:

1-800-FOR-BABY or 1-800-367-2229, a toll-free, bilingual (English and Spanish) telephone resource for questions about SIDS or other parenting topics.

1-800-FOR-BABY or
1-800-367-2229
NC Family Health Resource Line 

Visit:

www.NCHealthyStart.org to learn about North Carolina's statewide efforts to promote healthy pregnancies and infant health.

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Keeping Baby Safe At Home

Checklist for parents and caregivers

■ Emergency: 911 or _____

■ Doctor _____

Telephone _____

Address _____

■ Pharmacy _____

Telephone _____

Address _____

■ Hospital _____

Telephone _____

Address _____

■ Neighbor _____

Telephone _____

Review with caregivers or baby sitters:

- Bedtime or naptime basics
- Feeding
- Medicines
- Baby's sleep position
- Diapering
- Safety



This new member of our family lives at:

Parenting questions:

1-800-FOR-BABY or

1-800-367-2229
NC Family Health Resource Line 

Scissors icon
Cut out this checklist and keep handy next to your telephone.