

On average,  
a baby dies  
every other  
week in our  
community due  
to unsafe sleep  
practices.

ONE

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# Every year, about 22 babies die in our community due to unsafe sleep practices – that’s the size of a kindergarten class.

Even one infant death caused by unsafe sleep conditions is one too many because it’s preventable. As parents, grandparents, friends and family members, we can all play a role in our community’s effort to save more babies. One way is to learn about – and practice – safe sleep.

Sleeping with a baby in your bed or on the couch – even putting blankets and stuffed animals in a baby’s crib – puts the baby at risk. When putting a baby to sleep it’s important to follow the ABCs of safe sleep.

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## The ABCs of Safe Sleep

### A

#### ALONE

**Share the room with a baby, not the bed.** Always place a baby in an empty crib, bassinet or Pack ‘n Play with a firm mattress and fitted sheet.

**Don’t nap holding baby.** Babies should never sleep with an adult or child on a couch, chair, air mattress or bed.

**Why Alone?** You should never share the bed with a baby because you can roll too close or onto the baby while sleeping. The baby can also get stuck between the mattress and wall, headboard, footboard or other furniture; or the baby could fall off the bed and get hurt or fall onto something on the floor and suffocate. In Franklin County, two out of three babies who died were not sleeping alone, and were on an adult bed, couch or chair.\*

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### B

#### BACK

**On their back.** Babies should always sleep on their backs.

**Why Back?** Babies sleep best on their backs because during the night they can wake up to take deep breaths. If babies are on their tummies, they might not be able to move their heads in order to take that breath. While lying on the tummy, a baby’s nose or mouth may be blocked and the baby could suffocate. Also, the air the babies wake up to

breathe in could be the air they just breathed out, which is carbon dioxide or “bad air,” and this could suffocate the baby.

Placing babies on their backs prevents choking. Healthy babies naturally swallow or cough out their spit up, if they are on their backs.

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### C

#### CRIB


**Empty crib.** Babies should sleep in an empty, safety-approved crib – no bumper pads, blankets, stuffed animals, soft toys or pillows. These items can suffocate or strangle a baby.

**Appropriate dress.** Babies should not be overdressed for sleep. Sleep clothing should be lightweight. Fitted, appropriate-sized sleepers and sleep sacks are safer for a baby than blankets, which can get tangled around a baby’s neck or block their breathing.

**Firm mattress, with a fitted sheet.** Always place babies in an empty crib, bassinet or Pack ‘n Play with a firm mattress and fitted sheet.

**Why an empty Crib?** Many parents think their baby will get hurt if they don’t use bumper pads, but this is not true. Babies do not have the strength to hurt themselves, and no babies have seriously hurt themselves by getting stuck in the crib railings. Babies are safe and warm without the bumper pads, pillows, blankets and stuffed animals.



A top-down view of a baby in a wooden crib on a wooden floor. The baby is wearing a white onesie and lying on a blue sheet with colorful polka dots. A stuffed bunny is on the floor next to the crib. Six circular callouts with text are arranged around the crib.

### **In an empty crib.**

Keep the crib empty. Don't put pillows, blankets, bumper pads, stuffed animals or other soft toys in the crib with your baby.

### **Firm sleep surface.**

Put your baby to sleep on a firm sleep surface. A safety-approved crib with a firm mattress and fitted sheet is best.

## **Tips for creating a safe sleep environment for your baby.**

### **No smoking.**

Do not smoke or let anyone smoke around your baby.

### **Alone.**

Your baby should always sleep alone and in a crib. A baby should not sleep with an adult in a bed, on a couch or on a chair.

### **On back.**

Always place your baby on its back for naps and to sleep at night.

### **Appropriate sleepwear.**

Dress your baby in light sleep clothing such as a one-piece sleeper. Do not use a blanket.



## There is more you can do to keep your baby healthy:

**Get regular health care during pregnancy.**

**Avoid alcohol and illegal drug use** during pregnancy, after birth and while breastfeeding.

**Keep your baby away from smoke.** Do not smoke during pregnancy or allow smoking around your baby.

**Breastfeed your baby.** Breastfeeding reduces the risk of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome) and is healthiest for mom and baby.

**Give your baby tummy time!** When your baby is awake and someone is watching, give your baby time on its tummy. Tummy time helps prevent flat spots on your baby's head, and also helps your baby strengthen head, neck and shoulder muscles.

**Do not let your baby get too hot during sleep.** Keep room temperatures at a level that is comfortable for an adult. This will help your baby stay comfortable during sleep.

**Consider using a pacifier.** After your baby is breastfeeding well, offer them a pacifier during sleep times. The pacifier should not be attached to a string.

**Vaccinate your baby.** Infants should receive all recommended vaccinations.

**Spread the word.** Share these tips and the ABCs of safe sleep with everyone who cares for your baby, including family, friends and child care providers.

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## Helping a new mom or dad care for a new baby?

**Practice the ABCs of safe sleep while the baby is in your care. Tell new parents about the ABCs.** Share what you know about the ABCs of safe sleep with new moms and dads.

**Spread the word.** Along with practicing the ABCs, the next best action you can take is spreading the word about safe sleep practices. Share with family, friends, neighbors and your community about the safest environment for babies ... Alone. Back. Crib.

**Get more information.** Visit [CelebrateOne.info](http://CelebrateOne.info) or call (614) 645-1762 for more information and resources on creating a safe sleep environment for a baby.

