



SAFE SLEEP FOR BABIES: What You Need to Know

SUFFOCATION DUE TO UNSAFE SLEEP IS THE #1 CAUSE OF CHILD DEATH

From the time they are born, babies count on their parents and other caregivers to keep them safe. Yet on average every month, a healthy baby suffocates from sleeping unsafely in Pinellas County. 100% of these deaths could have been prevented.

Suffocation deaths due to unsafe sleep practices are the number one cause of preventable death for children under 18. In fact, nearly as many children die from this cause in their first year of life as die in the next 17 years from all other preventable causes combined. These include drownings, car accidents, gunshot wounds, and suicides.

Babies must be protected from suffocation every single time they are laid down to sleep – every night and every nap.

MORE BABIES DIE IN ADULT BEDS THAN ANYWHERE ELSE

A total of 90 infant sleep-related deaths occurred in the last 10 years in Pinellas County: that's about five empty kindergarten classrooms of children! The majority, about two-thirds, were caused by co-sleeping with a parent or other

adult, or when babies were laid down at naptime in an adult bed. Babies are also dying from sleeping on other soft surfaces like sofas, futons, and air mattresses – or from being laid down to sleep on their stomach instead of on their back.

THE CAUSE OF DEATH IS SUFFOCATION

The District Six Medical Examiner's Office has not determined a cause of death as SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) in 20 years. SIDS denotes that the cause of death is unknown or undetermined. However, when a healthy baby dies a sleep-related death, suffocation or overlay is frequently the cause of death.

WHAT'S COMFY FOR ADULTS IS DEADLY FOR BABIES

Things that adults find comfy for sleeping, like memory foam, pillow-top mattresses, thick down comforters, and pillows can cause babies to suffocate. That's why we stress never to sleep with your baby or lay them down to sleep on an adult bed or other soft surface. We also stress keeping baby's crib empty – nothing but a firm mattress and tight-fitting sheet. No toys, stuffed animals, bumper pads, loose blankets, or pillows. To keep baby warm, we recommend a one-piece sleeper or sleep sack, which is also known as a wearable blanket.

WE KNOW MORE TODAY THAN WE USED TO

Some believe they can safely co-sleep with their

babies; others practiced unsafe sleep with their older children, or perhaps their own parents co-slept with them or put them on their stomachs to sleep. We respond to all of these by simply saying, "We know more today than we used to." For example, car seats weren't always required for infants and young children, but we now know they are proven life savers. Today, most parents would never risk putting a baby in a car without using a car seat, even if they've never had an accident. Using the same logic, why would anyone risk sleeping a baby unsafely?

IT'S EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

It only takes one time for a baby to sleep unsafely to be tragic. DON'T RISK IT! Protect all babies from suffocation, every night and every nap. It's everyone's responsibility to learn, practice, and share these life-saving tips:

Follow Safe Sleep ABCs – ALONE, BACK, CRIB:

Always put babies to sleep alone on their back in an empty crib with only a firm mattress and tight-fitting sheet.

Room Share, Don't Bed Share: Bring baby's crib into parent's room, and never lay baby to sleep on a soft surface like an adult bed, couch, or air mattress.

Stay Alert While Feeding Baby: Set an alarm, and always return baby to crib after feeding. Breastfeed, if possible – it's best for baby.



**PROTECT BABIES FROM SUFFOCATION.
EVERY NIGHT AND EVERY NAP.**

Babies should always sleep ALONE.

Always on their BACKS.

Only in an empty CRIB.

Learn how to
SleepBabySafely.com

 **JWB**
Juvenile Welfare Board