

Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) Prevention

What is SUID?

Each year in the United States, thousands of babies die suddenly and unexpectedly. These deaths are called SUID, which stands for “Sudden Unexpected Infant Death.” This can include death from known causes (such as suffocation, entrapment – when a baby gets caught between two objects, like a mattress and the wall – strangulation, and intentional harm). SIDS is a type of sudden unexpected infant death that doesn’t have a known cause, even after a complete investigation.



Fast facts about SIDS:

- SIDS is the leading cause of death in babies 1 month to 1 year of age.
- Most SIDS deaths happen when babies are between 1 month and 4 months of age.

What can I do to help prevent SIDS in my baby?

There are three important things that can lower the risk of SIDS:

- **Provide breast milk for your baby, if possible.** Breastfeeding has many health benefits for both mother and baby, and has been associated with a lower incidence of SIDS.
- **Do not smoke during pregnancy, and do not smoke or allow smoke to be around your baby.** For help on how to quit smoking, call the Arkansas Tobacco Quitline at **1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)**.
- **Provide a safe sleep environment for your infant.**

What should I know about safe sleep?

- **Babies sleep safest on their backs.** Babies who sleep on their backs are much less likely to die of SIDS than are babies who sleep on their stomachs or sides.
- **Every sleep time counts.** Babies should sleep on their backs for all sleep times – for naps and at night. Babies who are used to sleeping on their backs but who are then placed on their stomachs to sleep, like for a nap, are at very high risk of SIDS.
- **Sleep surface matters.** Babies who sleep on a soft surface, such as an adult bed, or under a soft covering, such as a soft blanket or quilt, are more likely to die of SIDS or suffocation.

How can I make sure my baby is safe when he or she sleeps?

- **Always place a baby on his or her back to sleep, for naps and at night.** “Back to sleep” is the safest position for all babies, including preterm babies. Remember that every sleep time counts.
- **Use a firm sleep surface covered by a fitted sheet.** Firm sleep surfaces include an infant mattress in a crib, bassinet, or portable play area. Do not use a car seat, carrier, swing, bouncy seat, rock and play, or other similar product as baby’s everyday sleep area. Never place baby to sleep on soft surfaces, such as on a couch or sofa, pillows, quilts, sheepskins, or blankets.
- **Yes to room sharing.** Keep baby’s sleep area in the same room where you sleep. Your baby should not sleep in an adult bed, on a couch, or in a chair.
- **No to co-bedding.** Baby should never sleep in the bed (or on a couch) with you or anyone else, including siblings. If you bring baby into your bed to feed, make sure to put him or her back in a separate sleep area when baby is finished.
- **Keep soft objects, toys, crib bumpers, and loose bedding out of your baby’s sleep area.** DO NOT use pillows, blankets, quilts, sheepskins, or crib bumpers anywhere in your baby’s sleep area. Evidence does not support using crib bumpers to prevent injury. In fact, crib bumpers can cause serious injuries and even death. Keeping them out of baby’s sleep area is the best way to avoid these dangers.
- **Do not let your baby get too hot during sleep.** You may dress your baby in one layer more of clothing than an adult would wear to be comfortable, but no more. Sleep sacks and wearable blankets are appropriate as well. Keep the room at a temperature that is comfortable for an adult.
- **Give your baby a dry pacifier that is not attached to a string for naps and at night.** Wait until the baby is breast feeding well (usually 2-4 weeks) before trying a pacifier, but don’t force your baby to use it. If the pacifier falls out of baby’s mouth during sleep, there is no need to put it back in.
- **Follow health care provider guidance on your baby’s vaccines and regular health checkups.**
- **Avoid products that claim to reduce the risk of SIDS and other sleep-related causes of infant death.** These wedges, positioners, and other products have not been tested for safety.
- **Do not use home heart or breathing monitors to reduce the risk of SIDS (unless your baby’s doctor has recommended this).** If you have questions about using these monitors for other health conditions, talk with your baby’s doctor.
- **Give your baby plenty of tummy time when he or she is awake and when someone is watching.** Giving your baby tummy time when you can watch him/her helps your baby’s neck, shoulder, and arm muscles get stronger. It also helps to prevent flat spots on the back of your baby’s head. Allow your baby plenty of playtime while on his/her tummy.

This information was created and reviewed through a partnership with the UAMS Patient and Family Advisory Councils and the UAMS Center for Health Literacy.

- **Make sure everyone who cares for your baby knows the ways to reduce the risk of SIDS and other sleep-related causes of infant death.** Babies sleep safest on their backs, and every sleep time counts! Help family members, babysitters, daycare workers—EVERYONE—reduce your baby’s risk of SIDS and ensure a safe sleep area for your baby. Share these safe sleep messages with everyone who cares for your baby or for any baby younger than 1 year of age.

Safe Sleep for Your Baby

This is what a safe sleep environment looks like:



- **The baby’s sleep area has no bumpers, pillows, blankets, or toys and is on a firm, flat surface.**
- **Place the baby’s sleep area in the same room where you sleep – away from windows, drafts and vents.**

Resources:

American Academy of Pediatrics – www.healthychildren.org

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services - National Institutes of Health – www.nih.gov

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Bath Time

Baby Safety Basics

Get everything you'll need beforehand. This will make bath time safer and easier for both of you.

Have a safe water temperature. Your baby's skin can burn faster than an adult's because it's thinner and more sensitive.

- Set the temperature of your water heater at 120-degrees Fahrenheit.
- Put anti-scald devices on faucets. These devices turn off the water if the temperature is too hot.
- Seat your baby facing away from the faucet so he or she won't try to turn it on.
- Test the bathwater with your wrist or elbow before bathing your baby.



Never leave your baby alone. Babies can drown in as little as 1 inch of water. They usually drown in bathtubs, 5-gallon buckets and toilets. The main problem is lack of supervision – usually for a short period of time.

- Do not leave your baby unattended in the tub or near sinks, buckets and containers filled with water. Babies can slip out of bath seats, fall out of baby tubs or tip forward or sideways into the water and drown in seconds!
- Always keep one hand on your baby. This also applies to older babies who can sit up by themselves.

Do not tub bathe your baby until umbilical cord has fallen off and circumcision has healed.

Do not let older siblings bathe your baby.

Feeding Your Baby

Baby Safety Basics

Learn infant CPR and choking relief for infants.

Don't hold your baby while cooking or carrying hot foods and liquids. Most scald burns in young children, especially in ages 6 months to 2 years, are from hot foods and liquids spilled in the kitchen or wherever food is prepared and served.

- Heat bottles with warm water, instead of in the microwave. Drinks heated in a microwave may be much hotter than their containers. Microwaves also decrease nutrients in formula and in breastmilk. Test them before feeding your baby.



When using a high chair, make sure your baby is sitting down and is strapped in.

Offer cooked and softer foods when it is age appropriate (recommended at 6 months of age). Make sure that everything is cut into tiny pieces, mashed or pureed. A good rule of thumb is when you think it is small enough, cut it one more time.

REMEMBER: If your baby was premature, use his/her adjusted age. (Instead of using the birth date, use your due date.)

Make sure you're providing your baby **SUPERVISED** tummy time on a daily basis while you and your baby are both awake. This strengthens the neck and upper body muscles. When your baby is 3 to 4 months old, he/she should be doing this 20 minutes-a-day.

Babies explore with their hands, mouths and eyes, and enjoy toys they can touch or squeeze.

RECOMMENDED TOYS:

- Floor activity centers
- Activity quilts
- Squeaky toys
- Soft dolls or stuffed animals without button noses and eyes



TOYS TO AVOID:

- Recalled toys
- Latex balloons
- Hard toys attached to car seat handles
- Small, rounded or oval objects (like balls and marbles)
- Toys with strings or cords
- Toys with lead or magnets

TIPS:

- Use floor activity centers that do not move (instead of baby walkers). This keeps your baby in a safe location.
- Always strap your baby in when using swings or bouncy chairs.
- Before shopping for toys, consider your baby's age, interest and skill level.
- Read age and safety labels. Toys that are labeled for children 3 years and older should be kept away from children under age 3.
- Check old and new toys regularly for damage that may cause small pieces to break off.

Young children have small airways. Take an empty toilet paper roll and put the small object in it. If it fits completely into the roll, don't let children under 3 play with it. The reason you use a toilet paper roll is because it's close in size to a young child's fully expanded throat.

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For a Better State of Health

Make Your Home Safer

Baby Safety Basics

Look at the world through your baby's eyes to see what looks interesting and what can be reached. Get down on your hands and knees and check for small things your baby can choke on like coins and small toy parts.

Supervise your baby at all times. Don't rely on older siblings to take care of your baby. Even older children don't recognize dangers at times and may not be able to provide the best protection for your baby.

SAFETY BASICS:

- Have working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors inside all bedrooms, outside all sleeping areas, and on every level of your home. Test alarms monthly and change batteries once a year.
- Install stair gates at the top and bottom of stairs. Stair gates at the top must be attached to the wall with hardware.
- Secure furniture to the wall to avoid tip overs.
- Use cordless window coverings.
- Install window guards on all windows above the first floor.
- Keep a first aid kit on hand.
- Place emergency numbers and the poison control hotline, **1-800-222-1222**, by every phone and in your cell phones.

KEEP THESE OUT OF REACH:

- Electrical cords, frayed or damaged cords, uncovered outlets
- Plastic bags
- Matches, lighters, candles
- Fireplaces, space heaters, irons
- Guns
- Small objects (like jewelry, buttons, pins, paper clips, nails, stones, etc.)

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PREVENT POISONINGS:

Babies have slow digestion, so dangerous things in small amounts can be very poisonous.

- Lock up medicines, vitamins, cleaning products, pet food, alcohol, poisonous plants, and chemicals (like paint, gasoline, etc.) out of your baby's reach.
- Read labels and follow directions when giving medicine to your baby.
- Use child-resistant caps.

PREVENT BABY FALLS:

Falls from furniture (cribs, changing tables, highchairs, and strollers) are the most common type of falls in babies 3-11 months old.

- Don't leave your baby unattended.
- Keep one hand on your baby while changing diapers.
- When your baby is in a carrier, place it on the floor and not on top of a table, washer, dryer or other pieces of furniture.

PREVENT ADULT FALLS:

- Keep items picked up off the floor (move rugs and cords out of the walk-way) so when you are walking through the house with the baby in your arms you won't trip and fall.





For a Better State of Health

Car Seat Safety

Baby Safety Basics

The best car seat is the one that's right for your baby's size and age and can be properly installed in your vehicle.

- Use a rear-facing car seat in the center of the back seat of your car until your baby is two years of age (adjusted age) or as long as possible. Then, switch to a rear-facing convertible seat with higher weight and height limits.
- Have your car seat checked by a certified child passenger safety technician to make sure it's properly installed.
- Never leave your baby alone in a car, even for a minute.
- Make sure the harness straps that keep your baby properly positioned and secured in the car seat fit snugly. Loose harness straps don't provide maximum protection.
- All car seats have an expiration date. Please check your car seat's instruction booklet or the back of the car seat for expiration date.
- Never buy a used car seat if you don't know its full history.
- Please consult the National Highway Traffic Safety Office or a Child Passenger Safety Technician for information about reusing a car seat after a car crash/accident.
- Don't use any products in the car seat that didn't come from the manufacturer. Car seat fabrics meet strict fire safety codes. Add-on toys may injure your child in a crash.

REMEMBER:

Car seats are made for travel. Don't leave your baby in the car seat outside of the car for an extended period of time.

DID YOU KNOW?

Securing babies in rear-facing seats has proven to be the safest option to support their head, neck and spinal cord to prevent injuries. Children are safest riding rear facing to the upper weight and height limits of their car seat.

NEED HELP?

Safe Kids coalitions provide free instruction on how to install your car seat correctly by currently certified child passenger safety technicians.

To contact your local Safe Kids coalition, visit www.usa.safekids.org or call 202-662-0600.

EVERYONE should wear seat belts when riding in any kind of vehicle! The Injury Prevention Center at Arkansas Children's Hospital and the Infant Safety Program at UAMS are resources for information as well.

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Baby Product Safety

Baby Safety Basics

Buy or use products that meet the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association (JPMA) safety standards, if they exist. Keep in mind that not all children's products have standards regulating their design and safety performance. Be an informed consumer by examining the product carefully.

- Check www.recalls.gov to see if a product, especially if it was used before, has been recalled.
- Remove all recalled products from your home immediately.
- Sign up to receive e-mail recall notifications at www.cpsc.gov. When you buy a new product like a car seat, mail in the registration card to receive important recall information.
- Follow all manufacturer's instructions when setting up, installing and using a product.



For more information, visit www.usa.safekids.org or call 202-662-0600.

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Pet and Baby Safety

Baby Safety Basics

DO:

- Invite animal over for a sniff.
- Include animal in a comfortable and safe way.
- Close the door to the nursery.
- Remind your pet what you want them to do.
- Secure pet and use awake adult supervision.

DON'T:

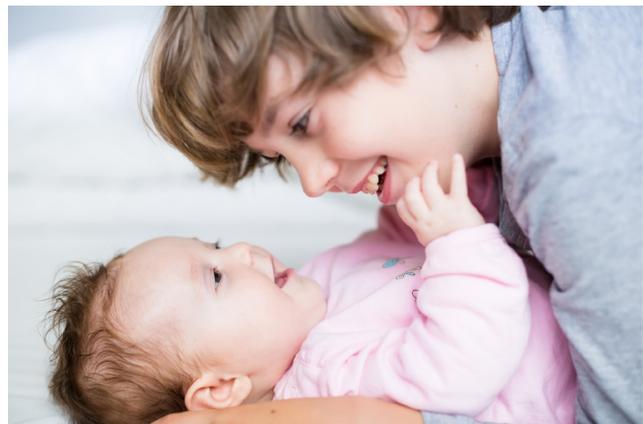
- Force interaction.
- Isolate pet from family.
- Allow unsupervised access to nursery.
- Scold your pet when being curious.
- Leave your baby unsupervised.



Sibling Safety

Baby Safety Basics

- Never leave a child under the age of 5 alone with your infant.
- Encourage siblings (or other children) never to pick up the baby without help from an adult, and always to be gentle with baby.
- Never let siblings share their toys or food with the baby. Infants have their own special toys to play with and can choke on older kid's toys/food.
- Encourage children to wash their hands every time before touching the baby.



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Period of PURPLE Crying

Baby Safety Basics

Healthy babies can cry a lot in the first 5 months of life. The period of PURPLE crying is a new way to understand this crying. It explains what is normal and what you can expect when your baby cries.

The word “*PERIOD*” means that the crying has a beginning and an end.

The letters in PURPLE stand for:

- **P— *Peak of crying.*** Your baby may cry more each week, the most in month 2, then less in months 3-5.
- **U— *Unexpected.*** Crying can come and go and you may not know why.
- **R— *Resists soothing.*** Your baby may not stop crying no matter what you try.
- **P— *Pain-like face.*** A crying baby may look like they are in pain, even when they are not.
- **L— *Long lasting.*** Crying can last as long as 5 hours a day, or more.
- **E— *Evening.*** Your baby may cry more in the late afternoon and evening.

Early increased crying is normal. It may seem like your baby cries more than other babies. But remember:

- At about 2 weeks of age, babies may begin to cry more each week.
- During the second month, babies usually cry more than at any other time.
- After 2 months, babies begin to cry less each week.
- Babies can still be healthy and normal even if they cry five hours a day.
- It may be frustrating, but the Period of PURPLE crying will come to an end.

WAYS TO COMFORT YOUR CRYING BABY:

When your baby cries, there are things you can try to comfort him or her.

- Check to see if your baby is hungry, tired, or needs changing.
- Walk and sing with your baby.
- Give your baby a warm bath.
- Take your baby for a walk or ride in the car.
- Hold your baby skin-to-skin.
- These ideas may not work every time. Remember you can always check with your baby’s doctor to see if there is something wrong that is causing the crying.

If you have tried all of these things to soothe your baby and he is still crying, and you find yourself getting frustrated, **it is OK to walk away**. Put your baby in a safe place and take a few minutes to calm yourself, then go back and check on the baby. **NEVER SHAKE A BABY**.

Shaking a baby can happen when a parent or a caregiver becomes frustrated with a crying baby and shakes him back and forth, saying something like, “why won’t you stop crying?”

Shaking a baby is VERY dangerous and can cause:

- Blindness
- Seizures
- Learning disabilities
- Physical disabilities
- Death

BE SURE TO TELL OTHERS:

- Tell everyone who might care for the baby about the Period of PURPLE Crying.
- Tell them that it is normal crying and how frustrating it can be.
- Talk about the dangers of shaking the baby.
- Tell them it is OK to put the baby down and take a break. Tell them it is OK for them to call you if they are getting too frustrated.
- Be careful who you have care for your baby, especially in the first 5 months of life. If the person has problems handling frustration or has a quick temper, it may be dangerous to leave your baby with them.

Resource:

National Center on Shaken Baby Syndrome

For more information, go to <http://www.PURPLEcrying.info>.