Safe Sleep and Breastfeeding

What Every Family Should Know

Breastfeeding helps protect your baby from SIDS.
This handout explains how safe sleep and breastfeeding work together.

Safe Sleep Basics

Every time your baby sleeps, follow these ABCs:

A
Alone.
Place your baby alone in their own crib or bassinet.

B
Back.
Always place baby on their back to sleep.

C
Crib.
Place your baby in a safety-approved crib or bassinet.

Room Sharing.
Keep baby's sleep area in your room for at least the first 6 months and preferably the first year.

Breastfeeding Protects Your Baby

Breastfeeding can help lower the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Breastfeeding lowers SIDS risk more when you:

Breastfeed only, without using formula.

Breastfeed longer. Babies who are breastfed for at least 6 months get the most protection from SIDS.

Pacifiers and Breastfeeding

Using a pacifier at sleep time can help lower the risk of SIDS. **If you are breastfeeding, wait until breastfeeding is going well before giving a pacifier.**

Waiting to give a pacifier helps your milk supply and gives your baby time to learn how to breastfeed before trying something new.

How to Know Breastfeeding Is Going Well

Breastfeeding is going well when you see all of these signs:

- Your milk supply has increased
- Your baby is gaining the right amount weight
- Your baby seems content and satisfied after feedings
- You can hear your baby swallowing during feedings
- Your baby is breastfeeding 8-12 times in 24 hours
- Your baby is having enough wet and dirty diapers for their age