

Five Myths about Sleep and Your Baby

In the first few weeks of life, babies spend up to 16 hours a day asleep! That's a lot of time snoozing, which is why it's important for parents and caregivers to make sure infants are placed in safe sleep positions.

Unfortunately, in Ohio, 3 babies die each week in unsafe sleep environments. These deaths are preventable by keeping in mind a few safe sleep ABCs. Babies are safest **A**lone, on their **B**ack, in a **C**rib. Beyond these basics, there are several myths circulating about infant sleep that might confuse parents and caregivers. To help you sort out what's safe and what to avoid, here are some common infant sleep myths:

MYTH #1 — Bumper pads protect my baby from hurting his head on the crib slats

Crib bedding should include a tightly fitted sheet — that's it! Bumper pads, pillows, stuffed animals and other extras pose a suffocation risk. Save the cute baby toys for when your baby is awake, not tucked in his crib.

MYTH #2 — A baby needs extra blankets to stay warm when she's sleeping

Feel free to cuddle your baby in a blanket while you're putting her to sleep, but once it's time to put her in the crib, all she needs is one layer of clothing (like her onesie), plus her sleeper or sleep sack. Extra layers (even hats) can put her at risk of suffocation.

MYTH #3 — Babies need to be tightly swaddled to sleep

The days of mummy-wrapping babies are gone. Swaddling your baby restricts his movements, especially his hips. And the extra blanket can cover his face, restricting his breathing.

MYTH #4 — If my baby is on her back, she might choke if she spits up in her sleep

Sleeping on her stomach puts your baby at greater risk for choking. Your baby's airway (trachea) is positioned above her feeding tube (esophagus). As a result, if she's on her stomach or side, the spit-up can fall into her airway and cause choking.



MYTH #5 — The safest place for my baby to sleep is right next to me

The Ohio Department of Health reports that 2 out of 3 babies who died during sleep, were sharing an adult bed, couch or chair. Unlike adults, who can move easily when their breathing is blocked, babies aren't strong enough to move out of the way. They can easily become trapped if someone rolls over them or if they become lodged between the mattress and the headboard; they can also be injured rolling off of the bed.

Talk to your baby's primary care provider if you have any questions about infants and sleep. For more information, visit www.odh.ohio.gov/safesleep.



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Facts about infant sleep from the Ohio Department of Health

- Each week, there are more than 3 sleep-related Ohio infant deaths
- Suffocation is the leading cause of injury-related death for babies prior to their first birthday
- Unsafe sleep environments place healthy infants at risk of sudden death