

# Safe Sleeping for Your Baby

**Did you know that 1-2 infants die unexpectedly in their sleep every month in Manitoba?**

SUID (Sudden Unexpected Infant Death) is a term that refers to all causes of sudden infant death during sleep. This includes accidental deaths caused by suffocation or strangulation in bed and SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) where the cause is not known.

Help keep your baby safe by following these tips for **every sleep** until your baby is one year of age.

## Place Baby on Back For Sleep

Infants that sleep on their back are less likely to choke or suffocate than tummy or side sleeping infants.



*No sleeping on tummy*



*No sleeping on side*



## Breastfeeding Protects Baby

**Breastfeeding lowers the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).**

If you bottle-feed your baby, you can still protect your baby by following the rest of the tips on this sheet. Always hold baby to feed. Don't bottle-prop.

After feeding, return baby to crib, cradle or bassinet for sleep.

Once breastfeeding is established, consider using a pacifier, which may reduce the risk of SIDS.

## Keep Baby Smoke-free Before and After Birth

**Smoke exposure is one of the biggest risk factors for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.**

You can get help with quitting or reducing smoking from your doctor, nurse or by phoning the Smoker's Helpline at **1-877-513-5333**.

It is safest to avoid using alcohol, tobacco, vaping products, cannabis and other drugs.

If you smoke, do it outside, wash your hands and change your clothes before holding your baby.



**Manitoba Addictions Helpline  
1-855-662-6605**

# Safe Sleep Environment for Every Sleep



The crib, cradle or bassinet should meet Health Canada standards.

*The mattress must be*

- Firm
- Flat
- The right size for crib, cradle or bassinet



**NO**

- Pillows or bumper pads
- Bottles
- Stuffed animals, toys
- Sleep positioners
- Loose blankets or quilts
- Nothing around baby's neck such as jewelry, teething necklaces, bibs or soother strings



**Place crib in your room**  
Safest place for a baby to sleep is in a crib, cradle or bassinet in your room for the first six months, or ideally, for the first year.



**Avoid overheating**

- Dress baby in sleeper
- Use a sleep sack or wearable blanket for warmth
- Keep room temperature comfortable, not hot
- Hats can make most babies too hot
- See **Safer Swaddling Tips** on page 4

## Other Safe Sleep Options

The safest place for a baby to sleep is in a crib, cradle or bassinet. Bassinets that are sold with some playpens are a lower cost choice. Parents may use other options for a temporary sleep space. Talk to your public health nurse to make sure it is as safe as possible. The surface baby sleeps on should be firm, flat, fit snugly, and only needs a thin cover. You can use a light blanket wrapped around and taped to a sturdy piece of cardboard for a mattress. Never use pillows or soft bedding.

*All sleep spaces should be kept:*

- On the floor
- Away from baseboard or portable heaters, fireplaces, wood stoves, ovens and other sources of heat
- Away from pets

Ask a knowledge keeper about safe use of cradleboards and moss bags.



**Cradleboard**



**Moss bag**



**Drawer (not in dresser)**



**Basket**



**Box or Carton**



**Bin (no lid)**

For tips on making these temporary sleep spaces, and making a mattress, call your public health office or visit [healthyparentingwinnipeg.ca](http://healthyparentingwinnipeg.ca).



# Unsafe Sleep Spaces

Images with an ✗ are **not** safe sleep spaces. *Sharing any sleep surface with your baby is unsafe.*



On soft surfaces such as a pillow or folded blankets.



On a sofa



With a sleep positioner or bumper pads



Sleeping with anyone on a sofa or chair



In a car seat or baby carrier



Alone on an adult bed



Infant seats, swings, strollers, sleep products that are inclined (not flat)



Sleeping with anyone on an adult bed or mattress

## Safer Bed-Sharing

Babies are safest in their own sleep space like a crib, cradle or bassinet.

If you do not have a crib, cradle or bassinet, contact your public health nurse who will work with you to find a solution.

Some families choose to have their baby sleep in their bed with them.

Use this checklist to bed-share more safely.

- ☐ Baby sleeps on back directly on a firm mattress. Never on a co-sleeper, car seat, or infant seat.
- ☐ Parent's long hair is tied up
- ☐ No soft bedding such as comforters and pillows near baby
- ☐ Bedding and sheets can't cover baby's face
- ☐ Bed is away from the wall and other furniture so baby can't get trapped
- ☐ Baby is not swaddled. Use a sleep sack if needed.
- ☐ Baby is placed on the side of one parent. Both parents know that the baby is in the bed. Baby is never in the middle of two adults or next to other children or pets.
- ☐ Room temperature is cool and comfortable so that baby doesn't overheat



### When not to bed-share:

#### If your baby:

- ☐ Was born at less than 37 weeks
- ☐ Was small at birth (weighed less than 2.5 kg or 5.5 lbs.)
- ☐ Is under 4 months of age, when the risk of suffocation and sudden unexpected infant death is highest.

#### If you or your partner:

- ☐ Smoke, if there is any smoking in the home or if you smoked during pregnancy
- ☐ Are overly tired or are sick
- ☐ Have been drinking alcohol
- ☐ Have taken any medications or drugs that make you feel sleepy
- ☐ Are obese



## Sleep Sacks

There are many types of swaddles, blankets and sleep sacks on the market. Choose the right size for baby and always follow the manufacturer's instructions.

### Not all are safe.

Choose safer ones that:

- ☐ Are snug around the upper body so that baby is unable to wiggle out
- ☐ Are loose around the hips. Your baby's legs should bend and move comfortably.
- ☐ Are not tight around baby's chest. You should be able to get two fingers between baby's chest and the sack
- ☐ Have no choking hazards like snaps, buttons
- ☐ Meet children's sleepwear flammability guidelines.

## Safer Swaddling

Most babies are warm enough in just a sleeper, or with a wearable blanket or swaddler if they need extra warmth. **Swaddled babies can become overheated and can be at risk of suffocation.**

*If you choose to swaddle your baby, follow these tips to help keep them safer.*

When choosing a swaddle wrap, look for:

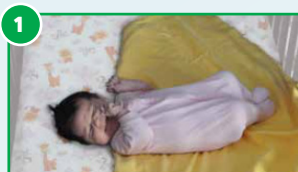
- ☐ Light, breathable fabric such as cotton with a loose weave. Avoid heavy blankets.
- ☐ No drawstrings, ribbons, cords or tight elastic.
- ☐ No buttons, snaps or decorations.

Choose the right swaddling technique for your baby's age:

- ☐ For younger babies (about 0-3 months old) wrap the arms in the swaddle with baby's elbows bent, and hands close to the chin.
- ☐ For older babies (about 3-6 months old and babies who can roll) leave their arms free.



### How to safely swaddle a baby



Spread the wrap out with one corner folded. Lay baby on wrap.



Baby's hands together over chest. Bring one side of wrap over arms and tuck under baby.



Fold bottom of wrap up, leaving room for baby's feet to move.



Bring second side of wrap across baby and tuck the end behind baby.

### Follow these tips to keep baby safer:

- ☐ Keep baby on their back
- ☐ Don't let baby get too hot
- ☐ Make sure that the blanket or swaddle doesn't cover their face
- ☐ Keep swaddle loose at the hips and legs. Babies who do not have their legs free to bend and kick can suffer abnormal hip development.
- ☐ When baby can roll over, stop swaddling or wrap baby with arms free.

Check Health Canada's website for recalls on baby equipment including sleepwear, cribs, cradles, car seats. Visit [healthycanadians.gc.ca](https://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca)

For more information on safe sleep, bed-sharing, swaddling, sleep sacks and other child health and safety topics, contact your public health nurse or visit [healthyparentingwinnipeg.ca](https://www.healthyparentingwinnipeg.ca)

