

## Sleep

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Sleeping safely.....                     | 295 |
| Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)..... | 298 |
| Preventing a flat head.....              | 300 |
| Sleep in the first weeks.....            | 301 |
| Sleep at around 4 months.....            | 302 |
| Sleep after 6 months.....                | 304 |
| Sleep between 1 and 2 years old.....     | 306 |



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## Sleeping safely

Starting from birth, your baby should sleep on her back. Once she begins turning over on her own, you can let her sleep in the position she prefers without any danger.

Your baby should always sleep on a firm mattress and in a crib, cradle, or bassinet that meets Canadian government safety standards (see [Crib, cradle, and bassinet](#), page 684). Aside from a tight fitted sheet, there should be nothing on the bed. If you think your child needs to be covered, use a light blanket or a sleep sack suitable for the child's height. Make sure your baby isn't too hot.



Every year there are reports of deaths of babies who were sharing their parent's bed. For this reason, the

Canadian Paediatric Society states that during the first six months of life, the safest place for a newborn to sleep is in her parents' room in her own crib.



Aurélie Maheux-Dubuc



For her own safety, your baby should sleep on her back, in her own crib.

If you are unable to sleep well when you're in the same room as your baby, you could have her sleep in a secure crib in another room. The quality of your sleep is very important.

### Do you sleep with your baby?

To avoid an accident, make sure you

- Always lay your baby on her back
- Use a firm mattress (no soft surfaces or water beds)
- Remove soft bedding and other items (e.g., pillows, comforters)
- Leave enough distance between the mattress and wall that your baby can't get stuck
- Never let your baby sleep alone in an adult bed
- Do not sleep on a couch or similar piece of furniture (armchair) with your baby

In all circumstances

- Never sleep with your baby if you have been drinking, taking medication that makes you drowsy, or have taken any other drugs (marijuana, crack, etc.)
- Never sleep with your baby if you are extremely tired

In these cases, it is much safer for your baby to be in her crib.

### Sleeping away from home

Your baby must sleep in a safe place, even when you are away from home. Never, under any circumstances, put your baby to bed in an adult bed and don't use pillows. If you don't have a crib, a blanket placed directly on the floor can act as a temporary safe bed for a baby who is less than 6 months old. Using a mattress placed on the ground or a playpen are two other potential solutions for putting your baby to bed when you are travelling. If using a playpen, do not add mattresses or padding.

A car seat should be used only for transporting your baby in the car. Car seats and baby seats should not be used in place of a crib as they are not a safe place for sleeping.

When you go for walks, your baby will be safest and most comfortable sleeping on her back in a stroller. The back of the stroller should fold down flat or almost flat, and your baby should be properly strapped in.



Be careful; your infant is not safe in her baby carrier if you are sleeping or lying down while wearing the carrier.



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# Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)

The sudden death of an infant under the age of one occurs while the baby is sleeping. We still do not know the cause of **sudden infant death syndrome** (crib death).

The main risk factors for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) are:

- Exposure to maternal tobacco use or other sources of tobacco smoke during pregnancy and after birth
- Sleeping on the stomach
- Blankets or bedding that can end up completely covering a child's face

Here are the recommendations to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome:

- Make sure your baby sleeps safely (see [Sleeping safely](#), page 295 and [The nursery](#), page 683).
- Eliminate smoking as much as possible during pregnancy and make sure no one smokes near your baby.
- Put your baby to sleep on her back. Tell anyone who looks after your baby to do the same. Babies who usually sleep on their backs and are then put to sleep on their stomachs are at greater risk for SIDS.
- Avoid using comforters, pillows, bumper pads, or other similar items in your baby's crib.

Using a baby monitor does not mean you can disregard these safety precautions. They must be followed even when using a monitor.



Babies who are breastfed and properly vaccinated have a lower risk of SIDS.



You can swaddle your baby in a blanket. In this case, make sure that she sleeps on her back and isn't too warm or too tight.