



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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October is SIDS Awareness Month

Safe Kids Pennsylvania has some tips to keep babies sleeping safely!

Mechanicsburg, Pa. – More than 3500 infants die each year in the United States from sleep-related deaths, with Black and American Indian/Alaskan Native babies dying at higher rates than white babies. Every October is marked by the annual observance of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Awareness Month. SIDS is the unexplained death of a baby, usually less than a year old and it often happens during sleep.

To reduce sleep-related infant deaths, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has provided recommendations for infant safe sleep. These guidelines are based on evidence and research and attempt to encourage caregivers to keep infants safe and healthy. The AAP guidelines for safe infant sleep include, but are not limited to:

- Babies should be put on their backs to sleep for every sleep until they are at least one year old.
- Babies should sleep on a firm, flat, non-inclined surface. This could be a crib, bassinette, pack n' play, or similar product.
 - Couches and armchairs are extremely dangerous places for infants and should never be used for infant sleep. Sleeping on couches and armchairs places infants at extraordinarily high risk for injury and death
- The space where the baby sleeps should be empty -no crib bumpers, pillows, toys, blankets, or anything else.
 - If there are concerns that the baby might get cold at night, a sleep sack or other wearable blanket can be used, and it's generally recommended to dress the baby in one layer more of clothing than an adult.
- Babies should sleep in the same room as a caregiver (room-sharing) but not in the same bed. Room-sharing is recommended for at least six months. Bed-sharing is not recommended in any circumstances by the AAP.
- Breastfeeding or feeding human milk is recommended, if possible, for at least six months.
 - Babies should always be put back in their sleep space after feeding at night.
- Avoid smoke, nicotine products, alcohol, marijuana, opioids, and illicit drug use during pregnancy and after birth. This includes all caregivers, not just the birth parent.

[Complete safety recommendations for safe sleep can be found on the American Academy of Pediatrics website.](#)

Safe Kids Pennsylvania knows that parents and caregivers want to keep their children safe at every age. If you or someone you know has experienced the devastating loss of a baby, there are resources available for support:

- [First Candle](#) is a nonprofit organization committed to helping babies reach their first birthdays. Select from the “Bereavement” menu on the website for grief and support resources.
- [Share Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support, Inc.](#) serves those whose lives are touched by the tragic death of a baby through pregnancy loss, stillbirth, or in the first few months of life.
- [Postpartum Support International: Loss & Grief in Pregnancy & Postpartum](#) page provides resources and discussion support material for parents coping with grief.
- [Children’s Bereavement Center](#) provides resources, events, and free peer-support groups for children, young adults, adults, and families dealing with the death of a loved one under any circumstance.
- [The Compassionate Friends](#) provides highly personal comfort, hope, and support to every family experiencing the death of a child and helps others better assist the grieving family.
- [Sudden Unexplained Death In Childhood Foundation \(SUDC\)](#) is the only organization worldwide whose purpose is to raise awareness, fund research, and serve those affected by SUDC.

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Safe Kids Pennsylvania (SKPA) is part of Safe Kids Worldwide’s global network dedicated to keeping kids safe from preventable childhood injury, which is the number one cause of death among children ages 1 to 19. These injuries range from accidental falls, to poisonings, car crashes, drownings, and many more. SKPA promotes and supports childhood injury prevention activities through education, collaboration, and advocacy throughout Pennsylvania. Safe Kids Pennsylvania is one of many statewide coalitions under Safe Kids Worldwide, and is led by the American Trauma Society, PA Division. For more information on Safe Kids PA, visit our website at <https://www.pasafekids.org/> or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/safekidspa/>.