

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Rev 12-27-20

POSITION

Question

I thought that vomiting infants might choke if they sleep on their backs.

Answer

Healthy babies naturally swallow or cough fluids- it's a reflex all people have. Babies are actually more likely to choke when they are on their stomach, as the picture below illustrates.

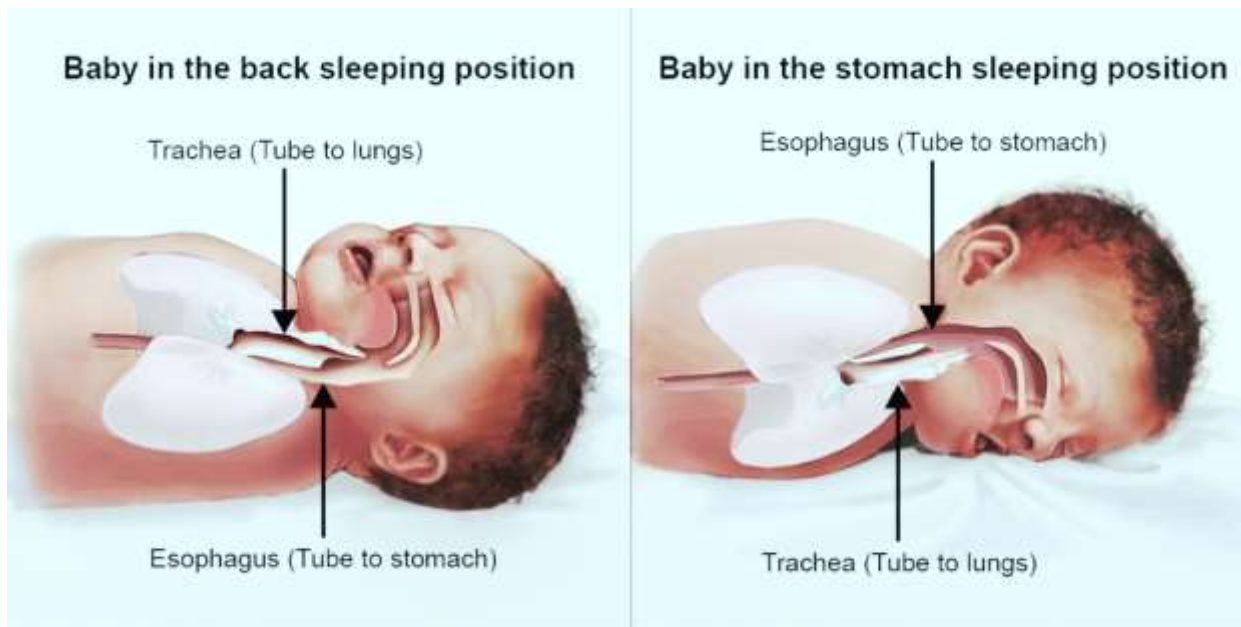


Image courtesy of the Safe to Sleep® campaign, for educational purposes only; Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/sids>; Safe to Sleep® is a registered trademark of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Question

My baby won't go to sleep unless she's on her tummy.

Answer

Start the habit of sleeping on her back as soon as you bring your baby home. Follow the same routine every time and put your baby down while she is drowsy but still awake. If your baby has been sleeping on her stomach, you may need to try some extra soothing techniques at first to get her used to this position.

Question

When my baby sleeps on his back, he develops a flat spot on his head and bald spots.

Answer

Talk to your doctor about ways to prevent these things. Babies spend most of their first six months of life on their backs. Providing supervised "tummy time," changing the direction your baby sleeps in each week to encourage him to turn his head in different directions, and cuddling him often so he is upright over one shoulder will all help prevent flat spots.

BREATHING

Question

If my baby stops breathing, I need to be able to hear them; that's why I put them in bed with me.

Answer

Your baby can sleep in the same room as you but it is safest if he sleeps on his back in his own crib/bassinet. Infant deaths while sleeping are usually very quiet events. Babies can get less and less oxygen into their lungs until they just stop breathing. It is safer for your baby to have its own safe sleep space in close proximity to your bed. Room share, not bed share!

CULTURE

Question

My mother slept with me. It is what we did in our family...and nothing happened.

Answer

Some families have grown up in a culture of bed sharing but while nothing happened in your family, there were and continue to be babies that die. In fact, most of the unsafe sleep deaths happen when sharing a bed with other adults or children. Since our parents' time, we know much more about why babies die in their sleep. Like wearing seat belts – when we know better, we do better!

Question

I want to breastfeed my baby and it is easier for both of us to be in the same bed.

Answer

Keep a bassinet right next to the bed (there are some that attach to the bed and have one open side). Your baby is safer when she has her own separate sleep space with no soft bedding or toys.

GETTING BABY TO SLEEP

Question

I am so tired; and my baby will only sleep soundly when he's with me. I am desperate to get some sleep.

Answer

It is very difficult when you are so tired, but do you really want to take the chance? We know infants die in unsafe sleep situations; we had ## (UPDATE!) infant deaths alone in Monroe County between 2007 and 2021. And we know that sleeping with another person is the number one cause of unsafe sleep deaths. Ask a relative or friend to watch your baby so you can catch up on your sleep.

Question

My baby doesn't like the crib; he just cries.

Answer

There are certainly a lot of things our children want that are not safe or good for them. It's our job to protect them and teach them. The earlier you start the habit of getting your baby comfortable in his own crib, the better. Falling asleep is a behavior that is learned; he can and will learn to fall asleep alone. Good sleep habits will help you both get better rest.

Question

My baby often falls asleep in his car seat. I don't want to wake him up so I think it's better to let him stay there even at night.

Answer

Because car seats don't keep your baby flat on his back, he still is in danger of suffocation or asphyxia. If his chin and mouth slump towards his chest, he may not get enough oxygen. Babies should sleep in car seats only when they are in the car and only when supervised by an adult.