

Safe babies make us all sleep easier

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When it comes to being parents, we'd all like to think common sense and intuition would be our most valuable allies in doing a good job.

And, in many things, they probably are.

But when it comes to one of our first and most natural chores as parents - putting baby to sleep - many of us are doing the wrong things despite our best intentions.

According to the Canadian Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths, researches say eight out of 10 babies who die could have been saved by a safe sleep environment.

How do you ensure a safe environment for your baby? There's a simple way to remember. It's A, B, C and 1, 2, 3. Always on my Back in my own Crib. A, B, C. As for the 1, 2, 3, it's a reminder of three simple rules.

1. No stuff in the crib. No bumper pads, pillows, heavy covers, comforters, stuffed toys or loose materials.

2. No propping up baby. No wedges, rolled towels or other ways to keep baby on his or her side.

3. Nothing that could choke baby. No bottles of milk, juice or water; no pacifiers on a string.

Of course, there's more to it than that.

Your crib should have been manufactured after September 1986. Spaces between the crib bars should be no more than six centimetres or 2-3/8 inches and it should contain a firm mattress that fits snugly against all sides.

The safest place for the crib is in the parents' bedroom for the first six months, away from radiators and sunny windows, drapery and blind pulls, cords and electrical outlets.

And there's more.



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Dress baby in a wearable blanket or use a sleeper so a thin blanket is the only cover needed, never use hot water bottles, electric blankets, duvets, comforters or other heavy covers. And never use pillows.

And still more.

Don't smoke in the house. Sharing a bed with your baby can be dangerous. Never share a bed with a baby if you smoke, have been drinking, using drugs or taking medication that might make you sleepy or if you are obese.

Baby should not sleep on an adult bed or water bed, air mattress, car seat, couch or swing or in a bed with other children.

If you have an infant younger than one year know one, ask York Region Children's Aid Society for copy of our free brochure, Safe Sleep for Baby. Call 905-895-2318, 1-800-718-3850 or visit the Canadian Paediatric Society at cps.ca or SIDS Canada at sidscanada.org for more information.

We'll all sleep easier if we know new parents understand how to put baby safely to bed.

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