

Your Call to Action



Regardless of the ultimate classification of death, detailed case reviews of sudden unexpected infant death during sleep in Baltimore City indicate that modifiable behaviors put infants at increased risk of sudden death during sleep.

Three important reasons why you should counsel parents about safe sleep ...

1 Unsafe sleep environments and prone positioning are significant contributors to infant mortality in Baltimore City.

- * Sleep-related death is the second leading cause of infant mortality.
- * It is the leading cause of death between 1 and 12 months.
- * In 2009, nearly all unexpected infant deaths during sleep occurred in infants who were not sleeping in a crib at the time of death.

2 There are evidence-based strategies for reducing the number of infant sleep-related deaths.

- * Place the infant in a supine (back) position for sleep
- * Use a safe sleep surface for every sleep – a safety approved crib, portable crib, or bassinette
- * Clear the sleep surface of all objects including pillows, quilts, and stuffed animals - just use a tight-fitting sheet for the mattress
- * Avoid bed sharing (sleeping with or napping with infants on any surface)
- * Avoid smoking in pregnancy
- * Ban all smoking near infant or infant living and sleep areas
- * Practice breastfeeding
- * Avoid overheating of infant
- * Offer a pacifier to the infant
- * Share a room - keep the crib or other safe and separate sleep surface in the same room as parent/caregiver

3 As healthcare providers, we have a responsibility to promote these strategies.

- * Counsel parents about safe sleep - research shows that parents comply with healthcare provider's advice on safe sleep
- * Provide assistance in obtaining a crib or other safe sleeping surface
- * Promote the SLEEP SAFE message among colleagues and in our birthing hospitals