

Supporting Safe Sleep Education in Communities

UPMC Altoona

UPMC | NURSING

For PA PQC Yearly Meeting May 21, 2025

Gap

- The “Back to Sleep” campaign, which promoted putting infants to sleep on their backs to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), began in 1994. It was named for its main recommendation for all infants to be placed on their backs to reduce SIDS.
- About 2500 infants die every year because of SIDS. Many of these infants were found to be in “unsafe” sleep situations or positions.
- On December 14th, 2010, the Pennsylvania Department of Health sent a letter to hospitals, birth centers and healthcare practitioners outlining the requirements of Act 73, SIDS Education and Prevention Act, which went into effect on Dec 18th 2010.
- Because Back to Sleep, was a new concept, grandparents and other family members voiced concern that infants could choke in this position and historically, “my babies slept on their tummy and they are fine.”
- There is a gap in education for the community and family members outside of the infant’s inner circle.
- The purpose of this quality improvement project is to disseminate safe sleep guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics to the community.

Target Audience

- Those who work on maternity and pediatric units, physician’s offices.
- Anyone attending a community health and wellness event.
- Other persons who are responsible for care of infants under one year of age.

Plan

- UPMC Altoona has partnered with cribsforkids.org and the UPMC Women’s Health Service Line (WHSL) to promote the latest research and education for parents of newborns and to have a safe sleep hospital policy.
- Infant deaths are reviewed for identifying evidence of unsafe sleeping positions, noting where the infant was sleeping.
- Identify potential gaps in education in the community. Are grandparents or babysitters aware of what safe sleep means?
- Educational materials are updated yearly at the UPMC system level.
- Hospital staff are provided yearly training on safe sleep for infants under a year.
- Plan community activities during the year that educate the public on safe sleep research and best practices to prevent SIDS.

Implementation and Key Interventions

- UPMC Altoona provided yearly updated Safe Sleep education to the staff.
- As UPMC Safe Sleep posters were updated, new information was posted in the postpartum and pediatric rooms.
- Nursing staff continue to educate the parents about safe sleep and model safe sleep practices in the hospital, unless a provider orders differently.
- On admission of an infant under one year of age, the question is asked, “where does your infant sleep including naps and at babysitters?”
- UPMC Altoona participated in community educational events, Kids Safety Day, Health and Wellness Fair, various local community events such as churches or community fairs.
- For Safe Sleep Month in October “clear the crib” challenges to educate all ages.

Evaluation and Outcome

- All staff that work in the maternity and pediatric units received the Safe Sleep education and return demonstrated/modeled safe sleep when caring for the infants. New hires received the initial training during orientation.
- “Clear the Crib” challenges were completed at the community events listed. Of note, the Health and Wellness Fair had an older demographic participating, and about half of them mentioned that safe sleep was not taught to them, as their infants slept on their tummy. This was the educational opportunity that we wanted, to explain the latest research on safe sleep for grandparents and babysitters.

Application


- On this topic, our team would most like to learn from our peers, any new ideas for fun, educational opportunities, and what age groups have we not targeted?

References

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2024). Safe Sleep Campaign Toolkit. Retrieved from: [Safe Sleep](#).

Corwin, M.J. (2025) Sudden infant death syndrome: Risk factors and risk reduction strategies. *UpToDate*. Retrieved April 27, 2025 from [Sudden infant death syndrome: Risk factors and risk reduction strategies – UpToDate](#).

Gates, K., et al. (June, 2024). The relation of maternal psychosocial risk factors to infant safe sleep practices. *Maternal and Child Health, 28* (6): 1061-1071



What You Need to Know:

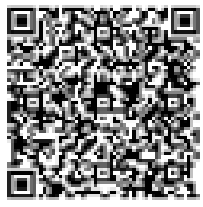
Safe Sleep for Babies

Why is safe sleep important?
The leading causes of death after newborns leave the hospital are sleep-related. **SUID (Sudden Unexpected Infant Death)** is the sudden death of a baby under 1 year old. Over 3,500 babies die from SUID each year in the U.S. Share these safe sleep guidelines with anyone taking care of your baby.

What is recommended for safe sleep? It is as simple as ABCD:

<p>A Alone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Babies should sleep alone in a crib, bassinet, or Pack ‘n Play”. • Share the room, not the sleep space for at least the first 6 months. • Bed sharing is never recommended. • In-bed sleepers should not be placed in an adult bed. • Side-sleeping wedges should not be used. 	<p>B Back</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put your baby to sleep on their back for every sleep. • The risk of SUID greatly increases when a baby sleeps on their belly. Babies cannot move their necks as freely when they are on their bellies and this may block their ability to breathe. • Once your baby can roll over, you do not need to move them to their back.
<p>C Clean, Clear Crib</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a firm, flat, non-inclined sleep surface (such as a crib, cradle, Pack ‘n Play”, or bassinet) with a tightly fitted sheet for every sleep. • Keep your baby’s sleep space completely empty (no diapers, wipes, bumper pads, pillows, or stuffed animals), as they can block your baby’s airway. • Dress your baby in a sleep sack or sleeper onesie. Do not use loose blankets until the age of 1 year. This helps to lower the risk of covering their head or getting trapped. • Hats should only be worn outside for weather protection. Never let a baby sleep with a hat on. • If your baby falls asleep in an inclined device with a strap (such as a car seat, infant seat, or swing) move them to a flat, firm surface as soon as possible to protect their airway and prevent suffocation. • For nighttime feeds, remove blankets and pillows from your bed, turn lights on, and set a 10-minute timer. It is important to move your baby back to their crib or bassinet after feeding. 	<p>D Danger</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being sleepy, exhausted, or under the influence of alcohol or drugs (including some prescription medicines) impairs your ability to take care of your baby. This makes bed sharing even more dangerous. • You may let your baby sleep with a pacifier with nothing attached once breastfeeding is well established.

Scan the QR code to read the full American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendations for Safe Sleep.



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