

Helping Baby Back to Sleep

Baby won't sleep on her back. She just cries!

- ◆ Sing, hum, or play soft music. Even making a soft rhythmic sound (Shhhhhh) over and over will help calm the baby.
- ◆ If needed, walk baby in your arms, then place him on his back in the crib when he is sleepy.
- ◆ If baby still cries, ask for advice from your doctor or from a trusted friend or family member who has experience getting infants to sleep on their backs.
- ◆ Place baby's crib or bassinet near your bed for at least 6 months. Your breathing may help your baby's breathing pattern.
- ◆ If nothing seems to be working and baby continues to cry, consider the following as possible reasons: hunger, dirty diaper, wants to be held, tummy troubles (gas, colic, etc.), needs to burp, too cold/too hot, teething, wants more/less stimulation, not feeling well.

Aren't babies uncomfortable on their backs?

- ◆ Babies do sleep longer and more soundly on their tummies -- *but that is the problem*. They sleep so deeply that they can't wake up easily when they might be in danger. Sleeping not as deeply may help to protect babies.
- ◆ Some babies seem happier on their tummies. However, babies will adjust to sleeping on their backs if you start placing them on their backs for EVERY sleep time.

What if baby rolls over from his back to his tummy or side?

- ◆ Always place babies on their backs when you put them down for sleep.
- ◆ Continue to place babies on their backs at bedtime and naptime, even after they have learned how to roll over.
- ◆ Once babies start rolling and choosing their own sleep position, you do not need to keep turning them over onto their backs.
- ◆ When babies roll over, it is even more important that there is nothing else (blankets, pillows, soft toys) in the sleep area to get near their face.

What if baby wakes up fussy during the night?

- ◆ If baby is only fussing (and not crying), wait a moment to make sure the baby is actually awake. Some babies fuss a bit during an "active phase" of sleep, and then fall back asleep.
- ◆ If baby wakes up and cries, go to him as quickly as possible—that helps calm baby so he can fall asleep again.
- ◆ Hold and feed baby if she is hungry, and comfort her before placing her on her back to sleep in her own crib or bassinet.
- ◆ In the early weeks and months of life, babies need to be fed often. The time between night feedings should increase as babies grow bigger and begin to sleep for longer periods of time at night.
- ◆ Try not to play with baby during the night when she wakes up.

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Don't forget tummy time!

- ◆ Provide "Tummy Time" for a few minutes 2-3 times a day when the baby *is awake and supervised* to help strengthen neck muscles and avoid flat spots on the head.

What can I do to help baby fall asleep?

- ◆ Keep bedtime and naptime routines the same every day, as much as possible.
- ◆ Most babies sleep well after a feeding and/or a bath. Hold baby to feed—do not give baby a bottle or sippy cup in the crib.
- ◆ Gently rub baby's arms and legs.
- ◆ Try to keep baby's crib away from loud noise. Keep things quiet for 1 hour before bedtime. Soft lighting helps baby get sleepy.
- ◆ Some babies like to hear a quiet story or song before bedtime.
- ◆ Cuddle and rock baby gently before bedtime.
- ◆ Consider using a pacifier when you place baby on her back for sleep. If baby is breastfed, wait until she is 1 month old or is used to breastfeeding before using a pacifier.
- ◆ If baby spits out the pacifier after falling asleep, you do not need to put it back in her mouth.

Here are more ways to keep baby safe while sleeping:

- ◆ Place baby to sleep **Alone**, on their **Back**, in a safety-approved **Crib** or bassinet **near your bed, but not in your bed**. The crib or bassinet is the safest place for baby to sleep.
- ◆ Enjoy cuddling baby when awake, but don't fall asleep together while holding baby close.
- ◆ Baby should **NEVER** sleep on sofas, chairs, recliners, waterbeds, soft surfaces such as pillows, cushions, sleeping bags, sheepskins, or any bed with another adult or child.
- ◆ Always use a firm sleep surface—car seats and other sitting devices are not recommended for routine sleep.
- ◆ Keep pillows, blankets, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, bumper pads, and other soft objects out of baby's crib or bassinet.
- ◆ Bumper pads, wedges and positioners should not be used.
- ◆ Make sure that baby is not too warm. Keep the room at a temperature that feels comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
- ◆ Keep baby's head uncovered during sleep. Don't put baby to sleep wearing a hat, as this can result in overheating.
- ◆ Consider using a wearable blanket or light sleep clothing to avoid loose blankets in the sleep area.
- ◆ Don't allow anyone to smoke around your baby, including in your home or car.
- ◆ Talk to grandparents, relatives, friends, babysitters, and child care providers about safe sleep and what works best to help baby fall asleep *on her back EVERY TIME*. **Tell everyone** who takes care of your baby to follow these important safe sleep practices.