

# Wisconsin PRAMS

Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System



## Safe Sleep Practices

January 2019

An estimated 3,500 infants die annually in the U.S. from sleep-related causes.<sup>1</sup> Infant sleep-related deaths occur due to accidental suffocation and strangulation, unknown causes, and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).<sup>1</sup> In 2015, 348 infants in Wisconsin died before their first birthday,<sup>2</sup> and of those deaths, 47 occurred in the baby's sleep environment where the cause of death was undetermined, asphyxia, or natural causes with unsafe sleep factors contributing to death.<sup>3</sup>

In an effort to decrease the risk of sleep-related infant deaths, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) published guidelines related to infant sleep position and sleep environment.



“Even though I was exhausted during the first few months of having my baby[,] I would never let her sleep in the bed with me[.] [I]t is far too dangerous and risky.”

- PRAMS mom

## The ABC's of Safe Sleep

### A

Share a room, not a bed. The sleep area should be free from bumper pads and loose blankets.



**1 in 3** Wisconsin moms often, sometimes, or always share a bed with their baby.

**4 in 25** infants sleep with bumper pads, and almost **half** of infants sleep with loose blankets.

### B

Place your baby on their back for every sleep for at least their first year of life.



**1 in 7** Wisconsin infants is **not** usually placed on their back to sleep.

### C

Your baby should sleep in a crib, bassinet, or pack and play with a firm mattress.



**1 in 14** Wisconsin infants is **not** placed on a firm sleep surface for every sleep.

### S

Have a smoke-free environment. Avoid smoking during and after pregnancy.



**3 in 25** Wisconsin mothers smoke in the last three months of pregnancy.

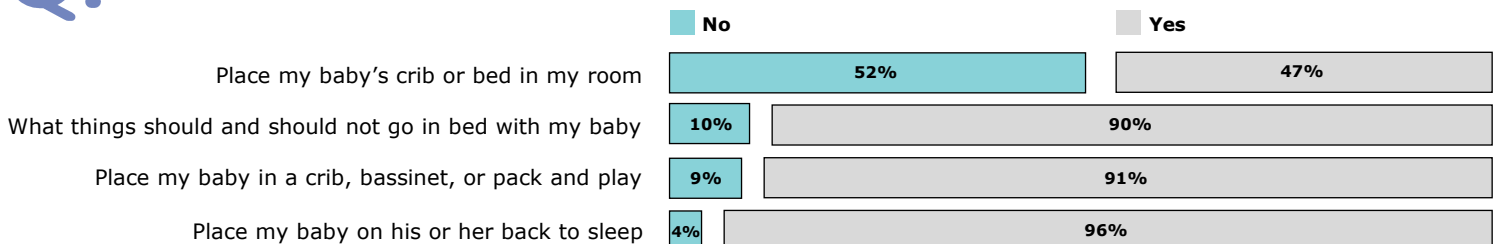
**7 in 50** Wisconsin mothers smoke after their baby is born.

The complete AAP recommendations can be found at [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org).

## Safe Sleep Education

PRAMS mothers were asked the following question about information their health care providers gave them about safe sleep.

**Q:** Did a doctor, nurse, or other health care worker tell you any of the following things?





Health care providers are usually talking to parents about the ABC's of safe sleep. However, the prevalence of unsafe sleep practices indicates a need to expand on that education and explore what beliefs and barriers prevent families from following safe sleep recommendations.

A conversational approach with families can uncover these and other reasons behind unsafe sleep practices and guide additional education and problem solving.

During these conversations about safe sleep practices, providers should be sensitive to the fact that some families may lack access to a separate sleep space for their baby to sleep in or a crib or pack and play. If families are facing these difficulties, providers should connect families with community resources in addition to providing education. Please see the "Resources for Families" section on where to refer families if they need help getting a free pack and play for their baby through the Cribs for Kids program.

## Conversation Starters

Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin  
Sleep Baby Safe Notebook

- "How does your baby usually sleep?"
- "What has your mom or other family members told you about where your baby should sleep?"
- "Do you think your baby will not sleep as well on their back?"
- "What do you think is most difficult about putting your baby to sleep in their crib?"

*For more resources, please go to  
[www.chawisconsin.org](http://www.chawisconsin.org)*

## Resources for Families

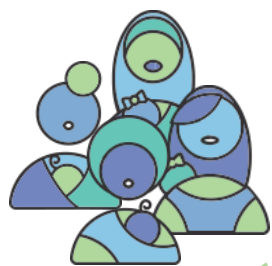
[wellbadger.org](http://wellbadger.org)  
1-800-642-7837  
Get connected to local family and health resources.

2-1-1  
Dial 2-1-1 to get connected to local health, housing, and other resources.

Contact your local health department or tribal agency about getting free pack and plays for families with infants!

The examples below are real concerns Wisconsin moms have shared, and illustrate potential barriers to following recommendations for safe sleep. Providers can prepare responses for these and other situations, and encourage families to provide a safe sleep environment for their baby.

It's important to remember that one conversation about safe sleep is often not enough and family circumstances change as their baby grows. Try to check in with families at each well-baby visit about where their baby has been sleeping and any concerns they might have.



My baby cries when I lay her anywhere except in bed with me.

I am worried that I won't hear my baby crying if he doesn't sleep with me.

My baby spits up a lot and I'm afraid she will choke if I place her on her back. My baby sleeps better on her stomach.

Let me teach you some soothing techniques to help you get your baby down easier.

You may feel better if you put your baby's crib in your bedroom. Sharing a room is also good for bonding and convenient for feeding. In my experience, the safest option is a separate surface in the same room.



Stomach sleeping constricts your baby's airway. In my experience, the safest option is always back to sleep, but make sure you burp after every feeding.

### ABOUT WISCONSIN PRAMS

Prepared in the Division of Public Health, Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Wisconsin PRAMS is a statewide survey conducted by mail with telephone follow-up. It is designed to monitor the health and experiences of women before, during, and just after pregnancy. Every year, women who delivered a live infant are randomly selected to participate. The 2016 data file had a weighted response rate of 59% with 1,232 mothers responding to the survey. Please contact [dhsdphprams@dhs.wi.gov](mailto:dhsdphprams@dhs.wi.gov) with questions or comments.

### REFERENCES

- <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/138/5/e20162938>
- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p01161-16.pdf>
- <https://www.chawisconsin.org/documents/IP5SUIDreport3.pdf>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/sids/AboutSUIDandSIDS.htm>

