El Paso County, CO Public Health

Happy & Healthy Babies
A Guide to Infant Safety



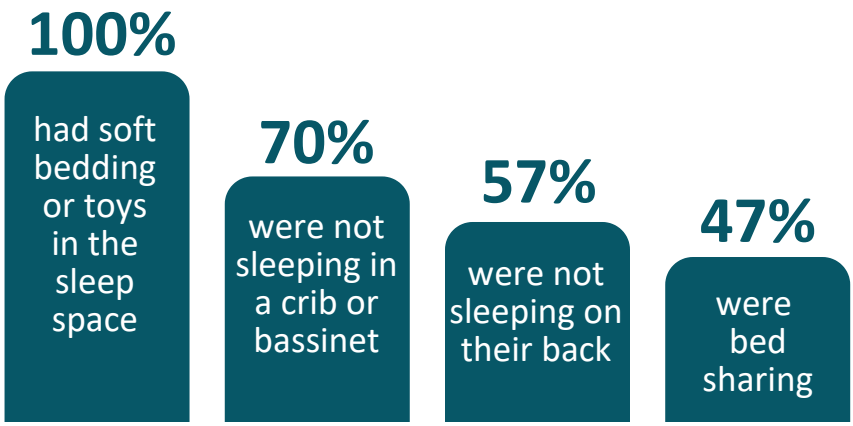
Why is safe sleep so important?

As families grow, we want all parents and caregivers in our community to have the education and resources needed to keep their babies safe. Unsafe sleep environments are a leading cause of death for infants in El Paso County, but **most of these deaths are preventable** by removing and reducing risk factors.

What are common risk factors in sleep-related infant deaths?

The El Paso County Child Fatality Review Team identified sleep environment hazards such as bedding or toys, sleeping with another person (bed sharing), and babies not sleeping on their back as the leading risk factors in local cases of sleep-related infant death.

Risk Factors Among Sleep-Related Infant Deaths Reviewed by El Paso County Child Fatality Review Team, 2020-2024 Combined



Creating a Safe Sleep Environment

- Share your room with baby, but never your bed
- Put baby on their back to sleep for nights and naps
- Keep baby's sleep area clear of all objects including toys, pillows, and blankets
- Make sure baby has a sober caregiver and a smoke/vape-free space
- Use a firm and flat sleep surface (crib or bassinet) with only a fitted sheet
- Set a reminder during late-night feedings to put baby back in crib or bassinet



Questions about safe sleep? Contact ***safesleep@elpasoco.com***

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Why does my baby cry so much?

Don't worry! Crying is a normal part of baby's development. Infants go through a stage of crying and fussiness that starts around 2 weeks old and ends around 3-5 months old. This is known as the period of PURPLE crying:

Peak of crying: Baby may cry more at 2 months and less at 3-5 months
Unexpected: Crying comes and goes, and you don't know why
Resists: Baby may not stop crying no matter what you do
Pain-like face: Crying baby may look like they are in pain, even if not
Long-lasting: Crying as much as 5 hours per day, or even more
Evening: Baby may cry more in the late afternoon or evening



How do I soothe my baby safely?

Every baby is different, but here are some tips and tricks for staying calm while responding to your baby's crying and fussiness. Follow the **5 S's** to soothe your crying baby safely:

Swaddle: Swaddle baby in a thin blanket or use a swaddle with Velcro to provide a secure feeling.
Side-Stomach Position: Put baby on their side or stomach while you hold them.
Swinging or Swaying: Gently move baby side to side.
Shushing: Make a sshh sound or use a white noise machine. Try to match your baby's volume.
Sucking: Use a pacifier to comfort baby.

What else should I know to keep my baby safe?

No Product Can Guarantee Safety

- Breathing and motion monitors have not been proven to prevent sleep-related infant death.
- Many wedgers and positioners marketed to keep babies safe can actually increase risk factors.



Stop Swaddling Once Baby Rolls

- Swaddling does not reduce the risk of sleep-related death but may help to calm baby.
- Avoid swaddling once baby rolls over on their own (typically around 3 months).

*Visit **elpasocountyhealth.org** to learn more!*