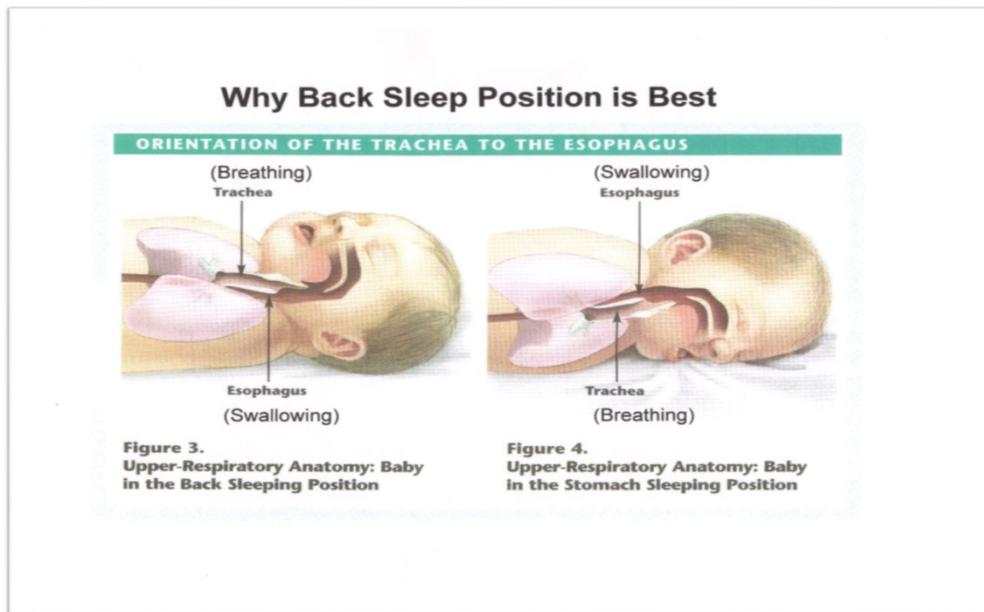


# Common Questions About Safe Sleep for Infants

(Information courtesy of the Monroe County Baby Safe Sleep Coalition)

## Can't infants choke if they vomit while sleeping on their backs?

Healthy babies naturally swallow or cough fluids - it's a reflex all people have. Babies are actually **more likely** to choke when they are on their stomach, as the picture below illustrates.



## I sleep in the same bed with my baby so I can hear them in an emergency. Don't I need to be close if my baby stops breathing?

Your baby can sleep in the same room as you, but it is safest if he sleeps on his back in his own crib/bassinet. Infant deaths while sleeping are usually very quiet events. Babies can just "slip away." It is safer to have baby in their own safe sleep space in close proximity to your bed.

## What if my baby won't go to sleep unless she's on her tummy?

Start the habit of putting her to sleep on her back as soon as you bring your baby home. If your baby has been sleeping on her stomach, you may need to try some extra soothing techniques at first to get her used to this position.

## What's this new issue with co-sleeping? My mother slept with me. It is what we did in our family...and nothing happened.

Some families have grown up in a culture of bed sharing. While nothing may have happened in your family, there were babies who died. We know much more about why babies die in their sleep than our parents did when they were raising us. Like wearing seat belts – now that we know better, we do better!

## What if my baby will only sleep soundly when he's with me? I am so tired and desperate to get some sleep.

It is very difficult when you are so tired, but do you really want to take the chance? We know infants die in unsafe sleep situations; and we know that sleeping with another person is the number one cause of unsafe sleep deaths. A disturbing number of infant deaths occur each year while the child is sleeping in an adult bed. Ask a relative or friend to stay with your baby so you can catch up on your sleep.

## What if my baby just doesn't like the crib? I can't just let him cry.

There are certainly a lot of things our children want that are not safe or good for them. It's our job to protect them and teach them. The earlier you start the habit of getting your baby comfortable in his own crib, the better. Falling asleep is a behavior that is learned; he can and will learn to fall asleep alone. Good sleep habits will help you both get better rest.

## What if my baby falls asleep in her car seat? I don't want to wake her up; can't I just let her stay there for the night?

Because car seats don't keep your baby flat on her back, she still is in danger of suffocation or asphyxia. If her chin and mouth slump towards her chest, she may not get enough oxygen. Babies should sleep in car seats only when they are in the car and only when supervised by an adult.

## I want to breastfeed my baby and it is easier for both of us to be in the same bed. Can't I just keep her with me when she is done?

Keep a bassinet right next to the bed (there are some that attach to the bed and have one open side). Your baby is safer when she has her own separate sleep space with no soft bedding or toys.

## What if my baby develops a flat spot on his head and bald spots from sleeping on his back?

Talk to your doctor about ways to prevent this from occurring. Babies spend most of their first six months of life on their backs. Providing supervised "tummy time," changing the direction your baby sleeps in each week to encourage him to turn his head in different directions, and cuddling him often so he is upright over one shoulder will all help prevent flat spots.