



Knox County Health Department

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KCHD Conducts Awareness Campaign to Promote Safe Sleep

Knoxville, Tenn. – The Knox County Health Department is kicking off a week-long campaign to promote awareness of safe sleep practices for infants and babies.

Every day this week, KCHD’s social media channels will offer evidence-based guidelines and tips to ensure caregivers feel empowered to make safe sleep choices for their infants.

“Recently, our region has seen an alarming rise in the number of accidental infant deaths, most of which are related to unsafe sleep practices,” said KCHD Health Promotion Program Manager Katherine Larsen. “These are tragedies that can be largely prevented through awareness and putting safe sleep recommendations into practice. Through this campaign, we hope to reduce the number of families who experience the unimaginable pain of losing a baby.”

A safe sleep environment can help reduce the risks of SIDS and other sleep-related causes of infant death, such as suffocation. KCHD recommends following the safe sleep recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics:

- **Share a room with baby for at least the first 6 months, with baby in their own sleep space (crib, bassinet, or portable pack and play), separate from your bed.** Babies with their own sleep area are at lower risk for injury and death from situations like an adult accidentally rolling over them. Having baby’s sleep space near, but not in your bed is safer than sharing bed with baby. It is also safer than putting baby in their own room.
- **Place all babies—including those born preterm and those with reflux—on their backs for all sleep times (naps and at night) until they are 1 year old.** Lying on the back helps your baby to easily draw in air by keeping the mouth and nose free of obstructions. An infant sleeping on its side or stomach increases the risk of SIDs.
- **Use a sleep surface for baby that is firm and flat, level (not at an angle or inclined), and covered only with a fitted sheet in a safety-approved crib, bassinet, or portable crib.** Soft surfaces, like couches, memory foam or air mattresses, armchairs, and thick blankets or quilts are not safe places for babies to sleep. Sitting devices, such as swings or car seats, and inclined or tilted sleep surfaces, with one end higher than the other, are also not safe sleep places for babies.



• **Keep things out of baby's sleep area—no objects, toys, or loose items.** Research links crib bumpers and soft, thick bedding to serious injuries and deaths from suffocation, entrapment, strangulation and SIDS. Remove things from baby's sleep area, especially if they are:

- *Soft or squishy* (pillows, stuffed animals, and crib bumpers)
- *Plush or thick* (comforters and blankets)
- *Loose* (non-fitted sheets and blankets)
- *Weighted* (weighted blankets, weighted swaddles, weighted objects)

Follow along on KCHD's social media channels this week for more practical, easy tips that promote safe sleep. For more information, visit the KCHD website or www.StrongBabyKnox.org.

About Knox County Health Department:

The first health department in Tennessee to achieve national voluntary accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board, the Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is dedicated to ensuring the conditions in which every resident can be healthy. For more information, visit knoxcounty.org/health.

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