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The Saskatchewan Prevention Institute is supported by:

Government of Saskatchewan
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Safe Sleeping for Your Baby

Deciding where your baby sleeps is important. The Canadian Paediatric Society and the American Academy of Pediatrics state that the safest place for your baby to sleep is in a crib, in your room for the first six months. This sleeping arrangement can reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) which is the sudden and unexpected death of a baby under one year of age.

Choosing where your baby sleeps is your decision. If you choose to share your bed with your baby, here are some important points to consider.

Parent Check List

If you choose to share your bed with your baby:

- ✓ Choose a mattress that is firm and flat (for example, not a waterbed or air mattress).
- ✓ Make sure your baby can't fall out of bed, or get stuck between the mattress and the wall or headboard.
- ✓ Never leave your baby alone in bed.
- ✓ Tell your partner when your baby is in bed with you.
- ✓ Make sure covers do not overheat your baby or cover his or her head.
- ✓ Don't let others, including children or pets, share your bed with your baby (only the parents or regular caregiver).

You should NOT share your bed with your baby:

- ✓ If you smoke, or if your baby is exposed to second-hand smoke in the home. Cigarette smoke affects your baby's breathing and increases the risk of SIDS.
- ✓ If you have drunk alcohol, taken prescriptions or illegal drugs, or are extremely tired or sick. These things affect how alert you are and your ability to respond to your baby.

- ✓ If your baby was born premature or is sick.
- ✓ If you are not on a sleeping surface that is firm and flat. It is not safe to sleep with your baby on a couch, recliner, air mattress, bean bag chair, or any other cushioned chair or soft surface.

Wherever your baby sleeps, you can reduce the risk of death by making sure your baby sleeps safely each and every time.

- ✓ Always put your baby to sleep on his or her back.
- ✓ Take out any bumper pads, quilts, toys, or pillows from the crib or bed that could suffocate your baby.
- ✓ Make sure your baby's mattress is firm and flat.
- ✓ Keep the room temperature comfortable; not too hot.
- ✓ Dress your baby in appropriate clothes for the room temperature (not too hot or cold).
- ✓ Make sure no one smokes around your baby.
- ✓ Remember that car seats are made for travel and not for sleeping when not in the car.
- ✓ Recognize that breastfeeding can provide some protection against SIDS.

Unsafe cribs are a risk to your child's safety. Only use cribs that meet current safety standards. For more information, go to the following Health Canada website:

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/cons/crib-lits/index_e.html

Developed in partnership with the Perinatal Education Program and the Saskatoon Health Region.

References available upon request.