

In November 2008, the Washington County Safe Sleep Taskforce was formed. This taskforce was created to address the need for countywide education on Infant Safe Sleep. The taskforce includes representatives from MMH The Birthing Center, Help Me Grow, River City Safe Kids, the Washington County Health Department, Marietta City Health Department, Families & Children First, Washington County Children Services, Marietta City Police Department, and Washington County Sheriff's Department.

A one-hour presentation has been designed by the taskforce to reach a wide audience including nurses, social workers, childcare workers, EMTs, and just about anyone who works with infants and toddlers. Participants are educated on current Washington County statistics pertaining to sleep accidents, and are given information on how to teach Safe Sleep Practices to their target audience. The taskforce recognizes that sleep accidents are preventable, and is committed to spreading safe sleep education throughout the county. If you are interested in having the presentation given to a local group you are involved in, please email the taskforce at safesleep@mmhospital.org.

Here are the “Top Ten” Guidelines for Infant Safe Sleep:

1. Always place your baby on his or her back to sleep, for naps and at night.
2. Place your baby on a firm sleep surface, such as on a safety-approved crib mattress, covered by a fitted sheet.
3. Never place your baby to sleep on pillows, quilts, chairs, couches, adult beds, or other soft surfaces.
4. Keep soft objects, toys, and loose bedding out of your baby's sleep area.
5. Do not allow smoking around your baby.
6. Keep your baby's sleep area close to, but separate from, where you and others sleep. Room sharing is safer than bed sharing.
7. Think about using a clean, dry pacifier when placing the baby down to sleep – but don't force the baby to take it. If you are breastfeeding, wait until your baby is at least 1 month, and breastfeeding is well established.
8. Do not let your baby overheat during sleep.
9. Avoid products that claim to reduce the risk of SIDS.
10. Provide TUMMY TIME for your baby, while the baby is awake and being supervised.

Finally, make sure you educate everyone caring for your infant on these safe sleep practices. Infants who are put on their stomach or side to sleep, when they are used to sleeping on their back, are at an increased risk for a sleep accident.

Let's keep our babies safe!!