

# Wake Safe

Helping babies  
sleep safely



## In South Dakota, from 2020-2024:

There were **93 infant deaths**  
related to sleeping or the  
sleep environment.

### Of the 93 sleep-related deaths:

Over half (**66%**) of infants  
were sharing a sleep surface\*  
with another adult and/or child  
when found.

**87%** of these sleep-related  
deaths were potentially  
preventable.

\*Sleep surfaces -  
couch, chair, bed, floor, mattress

Cases reviewed by ICDR only  
include infant deaths that occurred  
post-hospital discharge in South Dakota.

**Several factors increase risk when bed or  
surface-sharing:**

### Very high risk

#### **More than 10X the baseline risk**

- Using a soft sleep surface such as a waterbed, old adult mattress, couch, or armchair
- Adult is overly tired, taking medication that makes them drowsy, using substances like alcohol, or otherwise under-responsive
- Adult smokes cigarettes or uses tobacco products (even if they do not smoke in bed)

### High risk

#### **5-10X the baseline risk**

- Baby is younger than 4 months old
- Adult is not the baby's parent but is another caregiver, such as a grandparent or sibling

### Higher than average risk

#### **2-5X the baseline risk**

- Baby was born preterm (before 37 weeks) or at a low birth weight
- Sleep area includes unsafe items like pillow or blankets

# How providers can help:

- Teach families the ABCs of safe sleep (**Alone, Back, Crib**).
- American Academy of Pediatrics' Recommendations for a Safe Infant Sleeping Environment to Reduce the Risk of Sleep-Related Infant Deaths (2022) should be distributed to healthcare professionals, and the recommendations should be shared with parents/caregivers of newborns before leaving the hospital.
- If you work at a birthing hospital, consider becoming Cribs For Kids Hospital Safe Sleep certified. For more information, contact [DOHMCHBG@state.sd.us](mailto:DOHMCHBG@state.sd.us)
- If a family is unable to afford a safety-approved crib, contact the South Dakota Department of Health at **1-800-305-3064**.

## Alone

Place baby by themselves, and keep their sleep area clear of soft bedding such as blankets, pillows, bumper pads, and plush toys.

## Back

Whether at night or going down for a nap, place baby on their back every time they sleep.

## Crib

Always set baby on a firm, safety-approved sleep surface such as a crib, bassinet, or play yard.



## Grief/Loss Resources



**Safe Sleep**  
DOH SD



**Lach's Legacy**



**NIH**  
Infant Loss

## Safe Sleep Resources



**Safe Sleep**  
DOH SD



**NIH**  
Safe Sleep

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