

Infant Sleep Safety

Every three days in Michigan an infant dies due to being placed to sleep in an unsafe environment. Sleep-related infant deaths are the third leading cause of infant death in Michigan and are considered the most preventable. It is critical that beneficiaries are educated on infant sleep safety and are supported in providing a safe sleep environment for their infant throughout their participation in MIHP.

Infant sleep safety should be discussed at every MIHP visit while the beneficiary is pregnant. Having an appropriate sleep environment prepared for the infant prior to arrival home from the hospital is essential. The majority of infant deaths due to unsafe sleep occur while the baby is under 4 months old, so safe sleep must begin the first day home from the hospital. All staff should be familiar with the American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines for infant sleep safety (below) and provider should review these throughout the pregnancy with the beneficiary.

- Always place baby on his or her back for every sleep time.
- Always use a firm sleep surface. Car seats and other sitting devices are not recommended for routine sleep.
- The baby should sleep in the same room as the parents, but not in the same bed.
- Keep soft objects or loose bedding out of the crib, including pillows, blankets or bumper pads.
- Wedges and positioners should not be used.
- Don't smoke during pregnancy or after birth.
- Breastfeeding is recommended and is associated with a reduced risk of sudden infant death.
- Offer a pacifier at nap time and bedtime (make sure that it is not coated with any substance and that it is not attached to anything such as a string or stuffed animal).
- Avoid covering the infant's head or overheating.
- Do not use home monitors or commercial devices marketed to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- Supervised, awake tummy time is recommended daily to facilitate development and minimize the occurrence of positional plagiocephaly (flat heads).

The guidelines can be accessed at <http://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/pages/AAP-Expands-Guidelines-for-Infant-Sleep-Safety-and-SIDS-Risk-Reduction.aspx>. For additional education, a free online training course can be accessed at <https://courses.mihealth.org/PUBLIC/cm0682/home.html>. Nurses, Social Workers and Dieticians can receive continuing education credit for course completion.

Anticipate areas where beneficiary may have difficulty in following the infant safe sleep guidelines and assist her in developing a plan for success. Guide her in enlisting support from family members and help to educate all caregivers in the home on infant sleep safety. Common myths and barriers should be discussed. Videos, brochures and other resources can be accessed at www.michigan.gov/safesleep.

After the infant is born, provider should assess the infant's sleep setting, position, clothing and environment. This needs to be done at every home visit as parent's adherence to safe sleep guidelines typically varies due to what is happening in the home, i.e. if parent is very exhausted, she may not lay

baby to sleep in crib, but instead bring baby to bed with her, or if parent is living at a different location and there is not space for a crib or pack and play in the new location, etc. Additionally, applicable infant sleep safety education should be provided at every home visit after the infant is born.