



# Promoting Safe Sleep Practices in New York State

Approximately 90 infants die suddenly or unexpectedly each year in New York State (NYS). These infant deaths are referred to as sudden unexpected infant deaths (SUID) and are often attributed to unsafe sleep practices. When no cause can be identified, the death is labeled as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the ABCs of Safe Sleep, with infants sleeping alone, on their backs, in a safe crib, and in a smoke-free home for every nap or sleep time. Despite widespread efforts to promote these safe sleep practices, 1 in 5 NYS mothers say they share a bed with their infant. This puts babies at higher risk of SUID, which is more likely to occur when an infant is placed on his/her stomach to sleep, shares a bed with a parent or sibling, or sleeps on an unsafe surface or with bumpers, blankets or toys in the crib. SUID is the third leading cause of infant mortality in NYS, after complications from preterm birth and birth defects. It is important for providers to spend time discussing safe sleep practices with parents/caregivers and to ask for a commitment to follow these safe sleep practices.

**The risk of SUID can be greatly reduced by following simple safe sleep guidelines**

Follow the   
**ABCs**  
of Safe Sleep

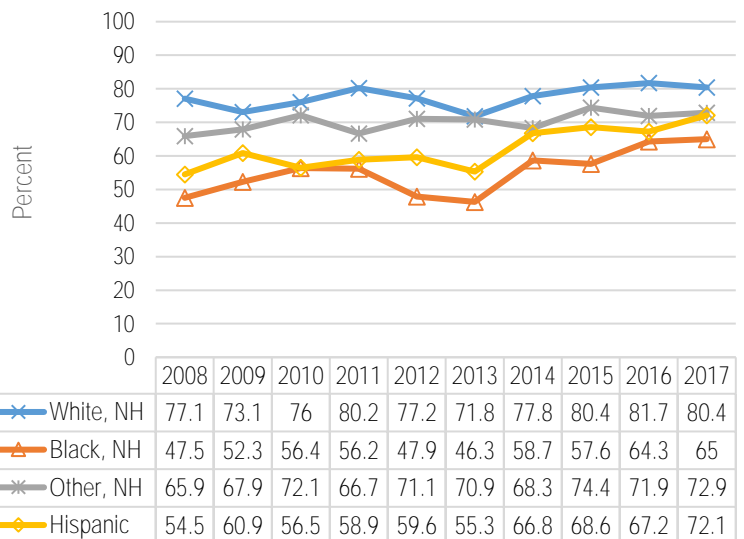


Baby should sleep  
**Alone**  
On their  
**Back**  
In a safe  
**Crib**  
In a  
**Smoke-free home**

Make sure everyone caring for your baby follows these tips!  
[health.ny.gov/safesleep](http://health.ny.gov/safesleep)

 Department of Health | Office of Children and Family Services

Figure 1. Percentage of infants who are placed on their back to sleep by race/ethnicity in NYS, NYS PRAMS 2008-2017



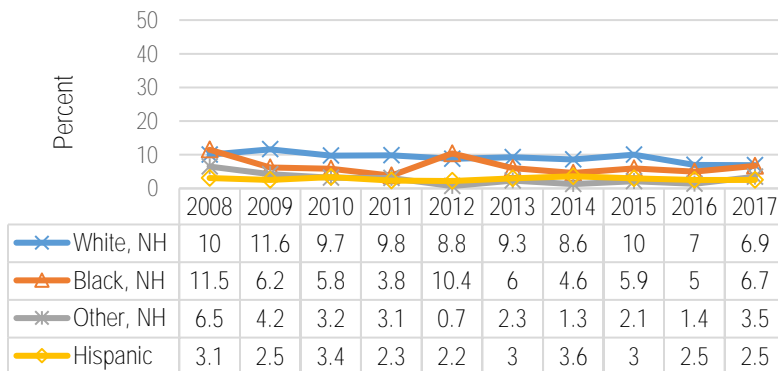
## What does the data show?

- The Healthy People 2020 goal (MCH-20) is for 75.8 percent of infants to be placed to sleep on their backs.
- The percentage of mothers placing their babies to sleep on their back has increased from 74.2 percent in 2016 to 75.3 percent in 2017 (PRAMS).
- In 2017, 65 percent of non-Hispanic, Black mothers reported placing their babies on their backs to sleep compared to 80.4 percent of Non-Hispanic, White mothers (Figure 1).
- In 2017, 6.9 percent of non-Hispanic, White mothers smoked during pregnancy compared to 2.5 percent of Hispanic mothers (Figure 2).



# Risk Factors for Sudden Unexplained Infant Death in NYS

Figure 2. Percentage of women who report smoking during the last three months of pregnancy by race/ethnicity in NYS, NYS PRAMS 2008-2017



In 2017, 6.9% of White, non-Hispanic women and 6.7% of Black, non-Hispanic women reported smoking during the last three months of pregnancy, compared to 10% and 11.5% respectively in 2008.

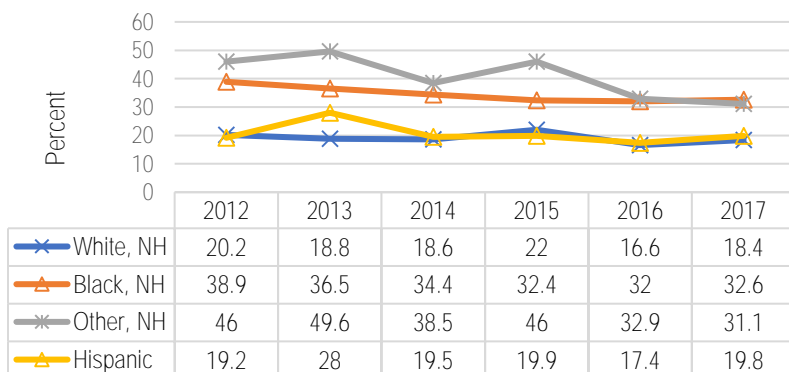
## Maternal Smoking

If a pregnant woman smokes, her baby shares every cigarette she smokes. One cigarette a day while you are pregnant doubles your baby's risk of dying from sudden unexpected infant death (SUID)<sup>1</sup>. Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do for your baby.

<sup>1</sup> [Maternal Smoking Before and During Pregnancy and the Risk of SUID](#)

[NYSDOH Smoking Cessation and Pregnancy Campaign](#)

Figure 3. Percentage of mothers who report co-sleeping with their infant by race/ethnicity in NYS, NYS PRAMS 2012-2017



In 2017, 32.6 percent of Black, non-Hispanic mothers reported co-sleeping with their infant compared to 18.4 percent of White, non-Hispanic mothers. From 2012 – 2017 the rate of co-sleeping declined overall.

## Co-sleeping

Co-sleeping or bed-sharing is a practice in which babies and young children share a sleep surface (i.e. bed) with one or both parents. In its 2016 recommendations, the American Academy of Pediatrics says this practice "should be avoided at all times." Co-sleeping puts babies at risk for sleep-related deaths, including sudden infant death syndrome, accidental suffocation and accidental strangulation.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> [AAP 2016 Recommendations](#)

[NYSDOH Sudden Unexpected Infant Death \(SUID\) due to Unsafe Sleep Practices](#)



## [Safe Sleep for Baby Videos](#)

[Safe Sleep Video in English](#)

[Safe Sleep Video in Spanish](#)

## KEEP YOUR BABY SAFE

### FOLLOW THE ABCS OF SAFE SLEEP:

- **A – Alone.** Baby should sleep Alone.
- **B – Back.** Put baby on their Back.
- **C – Crib.** Put baby in a safe Crib
- **S – Smoke-free Home.**

## Do's and Don'ts for Safe Sleep

<b>DO</b> put your baby to sleep on his/her back	<b>DON'T</b> put your baby to sleep on his/her side or stomach
<b>DO</b> put your baby in a crib to sleep for naptime and bedtime	<b>DON'T</b> use a couch, recliner, adult bed, car seat, swing, bouncy seat, stroller, infant carrier, or infant sling for routine sleep
<b>DO</b> use a firm crib mattress covered by a fitted sheet designed for specific product	<b>DON'T</b> use blankets, pillows, toys, or bumper pads in the crib
<b>DO</b> put your baby's crib in the same room as your bed (room-sharing)	<b>DON'T</b> sleep in the same bed as your baby (co-sleeping)
<b>DO</b> breastfeed your baby, and put your baby in the crib after feeding	<b>DON'T</b> sleep with your baby in bed after breastfeeding
<b>DO</b> use a pacifier for sleep	<b>DON'T</b> hang the pacifier around your baby's neck
<b>DO</b> keep your baby's immunizations up to date	<b>DON'T</b> smoke in your home or around your baby

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# Taking Action to Promote Safe Sleep in New York State

## What is the NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH) doing?

- Improving safe sleep practices through promotion of the ABCs of Safe Sleep campaign.
- The NYSDOH is collaborating with other states, the National Institute for Children's Health Quality (NICHQ), and community-based organizations, particularly Healthy Start and Maternal and Infant Community Health Collaboratives (MICHCs), in the national Infant Mortality Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network (IM CoIIN) to improve safe sleep practices.
- Through the National Action Partnership to Promote Safe Sleep Improvement and Innovation Network (NAPPSS-IIN), led by NICHQ, the NYSDOH is supporting three NYS hospitals working to make infant safe sleep and breastfeeding the national norm. The hospitals are implementing safety bundles to improve the likelihood that infant caregivers and families receive consistent, evidence-based instruction about safe sleep and breastfeeding.

## What can parents and caregivers do?

- Remember the ABCs of Safe Sleep: Alone, Back, Crib, and in a Smoke-free Home.
- Always put your baby on his or her back to sleep, for naps and at night.
- Do not let your baby sleep in the same bed with you or another adult or child.
- Share a room, but not a bed, with your baby. Keep your baby's crib in the same room as your bed.
- Teach other family members or caregivers to always practice safe sleep.
- Use a firm mattress or other sleep surface.
- Keep soft objects, toys, crib bumpers and loose bedding out of your baby's sleep area.
- Do not smoke during pregnancy or after. If you do smoke, talk to your healthcare provider about getting help with quitting.

## Local health departments and community organizations

- Promote messages such as the ABCs of Safe Sleep to improve knowledge, attitudes and behaviors about safe sleep practices.
- Ensure providers and family members are knowledgeable about safe sleep recommendations.
- Collect input from the community to better understand why some women do not put their babies on their back to sleep or why some caregivers choose to bedshare.
- Develop or use existing campaigns to support and promote safe sleep practices based on community input.

## Health care providers

- Talk with women during pregnancy and after birth about their sleep practices with their baby.
- Listen to women and caregivers and ask questions.
- Model safe sleep practices at all times while the infant is in your care in the hospital.
- Provide parents with educational safe sleep information.
- Encourage women to breastfeed their babies and practice safe sleep and breastfeeding together.
- Provide parents and caregivers with the tools and resources to quit smoking.
- Use materials from the NYSDOH Safe to Sleep Campaign in waiting rooms and exam rooms to reinforce the safe sleep message. [Materials Order Form](#)

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NYS Maternal and Child Health Block Grant  
2015-2020 State Action Plan  
[NYS Maternal and Child Health Block Grant Application 2020](#)

The Maternal and Child Health Services Title V Block Grant provides funding to States to improve the health and wellness of women, children and families. New York's Title V State Action Plan focuses on reducing health disparities and improving the health of all New Yorkers across the life span in the areas of maternal and women's health, perinatal and infant health, child health including children with special health care needs, and adolescent health.

Additional Resources:

Baby Safe Sleep Coalition

[Safe Sleep Coalition](#)

New York State Department of Health

[Safe Sleep for Baby](#)

Sudden Unexpected Infant Death and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome for Parents and Caregivers (CDC)

[Learn What Parents and Caregivers can do to Help Babies Sleep Safely](#)

National Institute of Health Safe to Sleep Campaign

[Safe to Sleep Campaign](#)

American Academy of Pediatrics

[A Parent's Guide to Safe Sleep](#)

Healthy People 2020

[Healthy People 2020](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[Maternal and Infant Health](#)

[Parents and Caregivers](#)

New York State Department of Health

[SIDS and SUID](#)

Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS)

[PRAMS](#)

National Institute of Child Health Quality

[Infant Mortality CoIIN](#)

[NAPPSS-IIN](#)

**Contact:** For more information, please send an email to [NYSIMCoIIN@health.ny.gov](mailto:NYSIMCoIIN@health.ny.gov).