



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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### **DOH marks Safe Sleep & SIDS Awareness Month**

HONOLULU – October is Safe Sleep and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Awareness Month, and the Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH) is reminding all parents and caregivers of the importance of making sure their infant is sleeping in a safe environment.

“There are about 3,500 sleep-related deaths among US babies each year, many of which are preventable,” said Sage Goto, head of Safe Sleep Hawaii, a public-private initiative led by DOH. “The death of an infant affects everyone—parents, grandparents, siblings, and others—who all experience the grief of losing a baby.”

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recently updated its recommendations for the first time since 2016, urging parents to make sure babies sleep on a flat, non-inclined surface and discouraging bedsharing.

[The AAP's Updated 2022 Recommendations](#) for parents/caregivers can help reduce the risk of sleep-related infant deaths in Hawai'i and includes the following:

1. Always place your baby on their back for naptime and bedtime, or whenever they sleep.
2. Never put any soft objects such as pillows, blankets, toys, or crib bumpers where your baby is sleeping.
3. Infants should sleep in your room and close to your bed, but on a separate surface designed for infants, ideally for at least the first six months.
4. Always have your baby sleep on a firm, flat surface like a mattress with a fitted sheet. This surface must not have an incline larger than 10 degrees.
5. Breastfeed and/or feed human milk to both term and preterm infants for at least the first six months if possible.
6. Offer your baby a pacifier at naptime and bedtime to reduce the risk of SIDS.
7. Never smoke or use substances around your baby or let anyone smoke or use substances around your baby. Smoking and using substances such as alcohol,

marijuana, opioids, or other illicit drugs should be avoided during pregnancy and after birth.

To learn more about safe sleep, attend a virtual workshop, or download an informational Safe Sleep Guide for Parents, visit [TheParentLine.org/SafeSleep](https://TheParentLine.org/SafeSleep).

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