



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO

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**OCTOBER IS INFANT SAFE SLEEP MONTH**

*DOH encourages parents and caregivers to create a safe sleeping environment for babies*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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HONOLULU — Governor Josh Green, M.D., issued a proclamation declaring October Infant Safe Sleep Month to coincide with the national observance of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Awareness Month, which is marked to increase the public's awareness of the high rates of these preventable infant deaths. The Hawai'i Department of Health (DOH) Maternal and Child Health Branch (MCHB) leads Safe Sleep Hawai'i, a statewide coalition that works to prevent infant sleep-related deaths by promoting safe sleep practices.

“According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 3,400 infants die each year in the U.S. from sleep-related deaths,” said Annie Bell, MCHB supervisor. “Through Safe Sleep Hawai'i, we provide information, resources and referrals to help parents and caregivers create a safe sleeping environment for their babies, which includes following safe sleep recommendations.”

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) provides the following recommendations to help parents and caregivers reduce the risk of sleep-related infant deaths:

- Always place your baby on its back for naptime and bedtime, or whenever it sleeps.
- Never put any soft objects such as pillows, blankets, toys or crib bumpers where your baby is sleeping.

- 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.
- Use a firm, flat, non-inclined sleep surface to reduce the risk of suffocation or wedging/entrapment. It's dangerous for babies to sleep on a couch, armchair or nursing pillow.
- It's OK to swaddle a baby, but stop swaddling as soon as they start learning to roll.
- Breastfeed and/or feed human milk to both term and preterm infants for at least the first six months if possible.
- Offer your baby a pacifier at naptime and bedtime to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- 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.

The [Safe Sleep Hawai'i webpage](#) includes referral links to community organizations partnering with the DOH. [The Parent Line](#) offers resources and information related to parenting, including free online safe sleep workshops, and will host a Community Baby Shower this Saturday, Oct. 5, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Child & Family Service 'Ewa Community Center (91-1841 Fort Weaver Rd.). Expectant and new parents with babies up to six months are invited to this free event for food, giveaways, resources and fun. Call The Parent Line at 808-526-1222 to register.

Another safe sleep partner is the [Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition of Hawai'i](#), which provides social services and clinical support for birthing families in Hawai'i. The coalition also runs the Hawai'i Cribs for Kids program that provides safe sleep education, support and cribs for income-eligible families.

To learn more about safe sleep and download a Safe Sleep Guide for Parents available in 12 languages, visit [health.hawaii.gov/safesleep](http://health.hawaii.gov/safesleep).

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