



# Infant Wellbeing at Home

There are many things parents can do to help their baby at home.

## **Comforting activities you can do with your baby:**

- Parent/infant skin-to-skin contact may improve an infant's ability to self-soothe and regulate arousal.
- Whole body infant massage may relieve discomfort from gas, aid in or improve digestion and feeding, reduce stress hormones, enhance immune system functioning and the development of the nervous system. Call 603-580-6668 for information about infant massage classes.
- Talk and sing to your child. Nursery rhymes may improve language skills. The slow, gentle rhythmic sounds of lullabies are soothing to both infants and parents.
- Place your child in different positions. Changing positions may improve breathing, decrease flat spots on the head, and allow for movement in less challenging positions.
- Encourage tummy time- Refer to the "Tummy Time and Your Infant" handout prepared by the Pediatric Rehabilitation Department.
- Swaddling; Refer to the "Swaddling: Is it Safe" handout prepared by the Family Center.
- Handouts can be found at [www.exeterhospital.com](http://www.exeterhospital.com).
- Find information about infant/child development and parent resources on [www. Pathways.org](http://www.Pathways.org).

## **Safe Sleep**

It is very important to protect your child's sleep. Sleep is vital for brain growth and development.

- All infants should be placed on their backs to sleep.
- All infants should be placed in a separate but proximate sleeping area (in a safety approved crib, flat infant bassinet, or in the flat portion of the Pack'n Play/play yard).
- All infants should be placed on a firm sleep surface. Remove all soft, loose bedding, quilts, comforters, bumper pads, pillows, stuffed animals and soft toys from the sleeping area.
- Never place a sleeping infant on a couch, sofa, recliner, cushioned chair, waterbed, beanbag, soft mattress, air mattress, pillow, synthetic/natural animal skin or memory foam mattress.
- Avoid sharing a bed with an infant.
- Risks of bed sharing- Infants have suffocated by becoming trapped or wedged between the bed and the wall/bed frame, injured by rolling off the bed, or suffocated in bedding. Infants have died from suffocation secondary to adults rolling over them
- If a blanket must be used, the preferred method is to swaddle/bundle the infant no higher than the armpit. Please refer to the "Swaddling: Is it Safe" handout prepared by the Family Center.
- Sleep sacks or wearable blankets can be used . These should be discontinued by 8 weeks, sooner if your baby is showing signs of rolling over.
- An infant should not sit or sleep in a boppy pillow. This pillow is for breastfeeding.
- Any position that allows your baby's head to drop forward or sideways may compromise the airway and make it hard for them to breathe.
- A good rule to follow is "back to sleep, tummy to play"

Equipment Use: Refer to "Keep Your child Healthy and Safe"

### **References:**

<https://safetosleep.nichd.nih.gov>

<https://pathways.org>