

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Baltimore babies thrive  
when they **sleep safe** and  
live in a **smoke-free** home.**



**No exceptions!** Always follow these steps so your baby stays safe.

This holiday season, city health officials are asking for your help to keep Baltimore’s babies safe. After declining every year since 2009, sleep-related infant deaths are on the rise. So far this year, **12 babies** have died while sleeping (this is sometimes called “SIDS”). Babies who sleep on their stomachs or share a bed with an adult or sibling are more likely to accidentally suffocate.

These deaths can be prevented. While babies sleep, families and caregivers can keep them safe by following these rules:

- **Alone.** Babies should never sleep with anyone else. Share a room, but not a bed with your baby.
- **Back.** Babies should always sleep on their backs. Babies are less likely to choke when on their backs.
- **Crib.** Babies should always sleep in a crib – every night and every nap. The crib should be clean and clear. There should be no toys or blankets in the crib.
- **Don’t Smoke.** Never smoke cigarettes or marijuana in a home with babies, young children, or pregnant women. Smoke in the home makes it harder for babies to breathe well.
- **Stay cozy, not hot.** As the cold weather approaches, be careful not to overheat your baby. When inside, dress your baby in the same number of layers that you are wearing. If you are comfortable in a room, your baby is too.

Another important hazard to be aware of during the holidays are house fires, which are most common in December and January. Last year, 10 children died in house fires in Baltimore City. Cooking and heating are the leading cause of home fires. **Never leave stovetops unattended and, when you leave the kitchen, turn all burners off. If you use a space heater, be careful not to leave it too close to anything that can burn, such as a couch or bed. Check and make sure that you have a working smoke and carbon monoxide detector.**

For support year-round, Baltimore families can call the following numbers:

- For a confidential, safe **parent-helpline:** 1-800-243-7337 (24 hours a day)
- To find **treatment for substance use or mental health:** 410-433-5175 (24 hours a day)

- For **help quitting tobacco**: 1-800-784-8669 (24 hours a day)
- For **help with utility bills**, call 410-396-5555 (Mon – Thurs, 8:30 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.)
- To find out if you can get a **free portable crib**: 410-649-0500 (Mon – Fri, 8:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.)

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