Safe Sleep

DO

- Do put infants to sleep alone on their backs in a crib or on another firm surface with a tight-fitting bottom sheet.
- Do dress the infant lightly and control the room temperature.
- Do use pacifiers as it may lower the risk of sudden death.
- Do supervise infants closely at all times.

DON’T

- Don’t put an infant to sleep with blankets, pillows, stuffed animals, or bumper pads.
- Don’t swaddle an infant.
- Don’t cover an infant’s face or let the infant cover its face with anything.
- Don’t allow an infant to sleep in a restrictive device or equipment not intended for infant sleeping such as bouncers, car seats, rockers, infant swings, sofas, futons or bean bags.
- Don’t put infants to sleep on soft beds such as pillow-tops, water beds, or memory foam. If the infant leaves a dent, it’s too soft.
- Don’t add mattresses or supplemental padding to pack-n-plays. Use only as directed per manufacturer instructions.
- Don’t expose babies to smoke or e-cigarette emissions.
- Don’t allow an infant to sleep for extended periods of time without checking on them frequently.

Choking Prevention

- Pay close attention to what your child is eating and what your child puts in his or her mouth.
- The way food is prepared may increase the risk for choking.

Common Foods that May Cause Choking and Should NOT be fed to Children under 4:

- Firm, smooth, or slippery foods that slide down the throat before chewing, such as:
  - Whole grapes, cherries, berries, melon balls;
  - Whole pieces of canned fruit
  - Hot dog shaped foods (sausages, meat sticks, cheese sticks)
  - Hard or round candy, jelly beans
- Small, dry, or hard foods that are difficult to chew or swallow whole, such as:
  - Popcorn
  - Raw vegetables or fruit
  - Hard pretzels
- Sticky foods that do not break apart and are hard to remove from the airway, such as:
  - Spoonful of peanut butter
  - Tough or large chunks of meat
  - String cheese
  - Marshmallows
  - Chewy fruit snacks

The key to prevention is Supervision

Tips for Serving Table Food to Young Children

- Cook foods until soft enough to pierce easily with a fork.
- Cut soft food into thin slices or small pieces no larger than ½ inch. Cut foods like hot dogs and string cheese into short strips instead of round pieces.
- Cut grapes, cherries, berries, and melon balls in half lengthwise and then cut into smaller pieces.
- Spread peanut butter thinly.
**Water Safety**

**Outside the house**

- **Never** leave children alone around water whether it is in a pool, wading pool, drainage ditch, creek, pond, or lake.
- Constantly watch children who are swimming or playing in water they need an attentive adult or certified lifeguard watching and within reach.
- Secure access to swimming pools. Use fences, self-closing and latching gates, and water surface alarms.
- Store water toys away from the water when not in use so they don’t attract a small child.
- Don’t assume young children will use good judgment and caution around water.
- Be ready for emergencies. Keep emergency telephone numbers handy and know CPR.

**Inside the house**

- **Never** leave small children alone near any container of water. This includes toilets, tubs, aquariums, or mop buckets.
- **Never** leave a baby alone in a bath for any reason.
- Keep bathroom doors closed and secure toilet lids with lid locks.
- Make sure small children cannot leave the house through pet doors or unlocked doors to access pools or hot tubs.

**TV and Furniture Safety**

- Secure TV’s so they cannot tip over.
- If you have a box TV, put it on furniture that is low, stable, and designed for the size and weight of the TV.
- Mount flat TV’s to the wall so they can’t be pulled down.
- Use brackets, braces, or wall straps to secure furniture to the wall.

**Car Safety**

- **Always** use car and booster seats. The law says you must put kids, under the age of two, in a car seat that faces backward and is installed in the back seat of the car. Older kids must be in booster seats or car seats until they are 8 years old or reach 4-foot, 9-inches tall.
- Make sure that kids’ arms, legs, fingers, and toes are safely inside before closing doors.
- **Never** leave children unattended in the car.
- **Never** leave your car keys where children can get them.
- Keep car doors and trunks locked at all times, even in the garage or driveway.
- Use reminders that a child is in the back seat. Leave something you need in the back seat, like your purse or phone or leave a stuffed animal or toy in the front seat.
- Talk to children about the dangers of playing around cars and watch them closely when they’re around cars.

**Additional Resources**

- Search Texas Child Care
  - [http://www.txchildcaresearch.org](http://www.txchildcaresearch.org)
- ABCs of Safe Sleep for Babies
  - [https://www.getparentingtips.com/babies/safety/ABCs-of-safe-sleep-for-babies/](https://www.getparentingtips.com/babies/safety/ABCs-of-safe-sleep-for-babies/)
- Water Safety for Kids
- Kids and Cars
  - [https://www.kidsandcars.org/](https://www.kidsandcars.org/)
- Safe Kids
  - [https://www.safekids.org/](https://www.safekids.org/)
- USDA Food and Nutrition
  - [https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn](https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn)
- DPS Child Passenger Safety Information