

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

Safe sleep habits for babies can reduce sudden unexpected infant deaths

HSHS hospitals provide guidance to new and expecting parents for SIDS Awareness Month

SPRINGFIELD, III. — As October is winding down, the caring clinicians at Hospital Sisters Health System's (HSHS) Women and Infants Centers remind the community, especially new parents, that it is Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Awareness Month and want to stress the practice of safe sleep habits to reduce the risk of SIDS.

Unsafe sleep is a leading cause of death for children one year old and younger. In 2022, there were about 3,700 [sudden unexpected infant deaths \(SUID\)](#) in the United States, and 1,529 of those deaths were from SIDS. In 2021, non-Hispanic black infants were more than four times as likely to die of SUID than non-Hispanic white or Hispanic infants.

Safe sleep practices are ways to make sure babies are as safe as they can be while sleeping to prevent SUID and SIDS. Medical experts recommend following the ABCs of safe sleep practices until babies turn one:

- **A**lone – Babies are safest when they sleep alone, with no blanket, bumpers or anything else in the crib with them, and not sleeping with their parents.
- **B**ack – Babies should always be placed on their backs to sleep at nighttime and for naps.
- **C**rib – Babies should sleep in a crib, bassinet or portable play yard with a firm, flat mattress and fitted sheet.

“We educate all of our parents on safe sleep habits,” said Debbie Martin, APRN, NNP-BC, a neonatal nurse practitioner with HSHS Medical Group's Nursery Program at HSHS St. Joseph's Women and Infants Center. “Babies should be laid down to sleep on their backs until they are old enough to roll over and have enough neck strength to turn their heads from side-to-side. Also, babies should sleep alone in a crib with a firm mattress free of blankets, bumpers, stuffed animals or any other crib items.”

The HSHS hospitals located in Southern Illinois hold a variety of accreditations for teaching and providing safe care to those who deliver at these locations, including:

- St. Elizabeth's Hospital in O'Fallon was recognized and recertified as a Gold Cribs for Kids® Infant Safe Sleep Hospital in August 2024 by the National Safe Sleep Hospital Certification Program, which was created by Cribs for Kids.
- St. Joseph's Hospital in Breese has earned The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval® for Advanced Certification in Perinatal Care, recognizing their integrated, coordinated, patient-centered care for complicated and uncomplicated pregnancies and births. Safe sleep practices are also taught in St. Joseph's prenatal classes.

“It can be hard to stay awake with your baby for those late-night feedings,” says Amanda Schaefer MSN, RN, Manager of Women and Infants Center at St. Elizabeth’s Hospital. “If you think you’re likely to fall asleep, remove bedding or other objects from the area. Consider setting an alarm for every few minutes, listening to a podcast, or asking your partner to stay awake with you.”

For more information on safe sleep habits, visit the American Academy of Pediatrics web site at aap.org.

For more information about services available at all HSHS locations, visit hshs.org.

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About Hospital Sisters Health System (HSHS)

HSHS St. John’s Hospital, Springfield is part of Hospital Sisters Health System (HSHS), a Catholic health care ministry founded in 1875. Dedicated to our Mission to reveal and embody Christ’s healing love for all people through high-quality Franciscan health care, HSHS clinicians provide exceptional care centered on the whole person. Based in Springfield, Illinois, HSHS employs more than 11,000 colleagues who provide care in 13 acute-care, children’s and critical-access hospitals and home health and hospice programs in Central and Southern Illinois and Eastern Wisconsin. HSHS is aligned with more than 1,000 primary and specialty physicians and advanced practitioners through its owned affiliates [HSHS Medical Group](#) and [Prairie Cardiovascular](#) and its partnership with [Prevea Health](#). For more information about HSHS, visit hshs.org.