



Crib bumpers in the night: a hazard to infants

As a parent, your primary aim is to protect your child and that includes providing a safe sleeping environment. But the pillow-like crib bumpers often used to prevent bruising can pose serious risks to your child's safety.

A September 2007 study in the *Journal of Pediatrics* concluded that crib and bassinet bumpers are unsafe because they can suffocate or strangle an infant.

Parents should keep pillows – including crib bumpers – and other soft materials out of their baby's sleeping area, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the "Back to Sleep" campaign, which reduced Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) deaths by more than 40% between 1992 and 2000. Additionally, data from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission show it is extremely rare for the contact between an infant and the sides of the crib to cause long-term injury.

So while crib bumpers may give parents a feeling of security, in reality these soft objects pose a serious safety risk to infants.

The AAP, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and First Candle SIDS Alliance offer these additional tips to parents with children in cribs:

- Always put your baby to sleep on his or her back.
- Until age 6 months, move your baby's crib near your bed.
- Don't overdress your baby for naps or bedtime. (One-piece sleepers work best; young children generally need one more layer of clothing than an adult might need.)
- Remove loose bedding (blankets, pillows, sheepskins, etc.) from your child's sleeping area. If a blanket must be used for warmth, tuck it in around the crib mattress, reaching only as far as the baby's chest.

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