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## **Michigan seeks to reduce the number of babies who die from sleep-related causes, releases first state report**

LANSING, Mich. – In an effort to reduce sleep-related infant deaths in the state, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services is urging parents and caregivers to follow safe sleeping practices with babies in their care.

Michigan's infant mortality rate is higher than the national average, with 6.8 deaths per 1,000 live births compared to the national rate of 5.9 deaths in 2015. A major contributor to that rate is sleep-related infant deaths, the cause of death for 159 infants in 2015.

Gov. Rick Snyder has identified the reduction of infant mortality as a top priority in his plan to make Michigan a healthier state, and a key part of that plan is the reduction of sleep-related infant deaths.

"A baby dies nearly every other day in Michigan due to an unsafe sleep environment," said First Lady Sue Snyder, a long-time champion of this issue. "As a state, we need to do everything we can to reduce these preventable deaths for the sake of Michigan's children and families, and I look forward to continuing this critical work."

As part of that effort, MDHHS recently completed the report "[Infant Safe Sleep in Michigan: A Comprehensive Look at Sleep-Related Deaths](#)." This marks the first time Michigan has compiled data, research and information regarding local and statewide safe sleep initiatives into one comprehensive document.

"Safe sleep practices prevent accidental infant suffocation," said Lynette Biery, director of MDHHS's Bureau of Family Health Services. "Ensuring that everyone who cares for an infant has a safe sleep environment and follows safe sleep practices will help eliminate preventable infant deaths and keep babies safe and healthy."

Sleep-related infant deaths are those that involve unsafe sleep environments, including the use of soft bedding; articles in the crib, such as toys or blankets; infant sleeping in an adult bed or on a couch or sofa chair; infant sleeping with another adult or child; or an infant sleeping on their stomach or side.

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To reduce these types of infant deaths, parents and caregivers should follow the [American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines](#) to create safe sleep environments for infants:

- Place infants on their back in a crib, bassinet or pack-n-play every sleep time.
- Use a firm mattress with a tightly fitted sheet.
- Keep soft objects or loose bedding out of the crib, including pillows, blankets and bumper pads.
- Do not use wedges or positioners.
- Avoid covering the infant's head or overheating.

AAP also recommends infants sleep in the same room as parents - but not in the same bed - for at least the first six months of their lives and breastfeeding, as they are associated with preventing sleep-related infant death.

To learn more on infant safe sleep, visit [Michigan.gov/safesleep](https://www.michigan.gov/safesleep).

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