

# Crib Safety



Parents and caregivers rely on cribs to protect children while they sleep. However, more than 9,500 injuries and over 100 deaths related to cribs, playpens and bassinets are seen in U.S. emergency departments each year. By following a few safety tips, parents and caregivers can help create a safe sleep environment for their little ones.

## Choosing a Crib and Mattress

- Select a crib that meets all current safety standards, does not have a drop side and is not old or broken.
- Avoid cribs with cutouts, decorative corner posts, or knobs that stick up more than 1/16th of an inch.
- Take caution when using a secondhand crib. It may have been recalled or have missing parts or instructions.
- Check for crib recalls at [www.recalls.gov](http://www.recalls.gov).
- If you can fit more than two fingers between the mattress and the crib, you need a bigger mattress.
- The slats of the crib should be no more than 2 and 3/8 inches apart. A baby's head could get trapped in more widely spaced slats.

## Dangers of Drop-Side Cribs

- The drop-side can detach and create a V-gap, or space, between the crib and the mattress. Babies can become trapped in this space and suffocate.
- The rails can become detached as a result of problems with hardware failure or improper assembly.
- If you are using a drop-side crib, make sure that the crib has not been recalled, is working properly, and does not have any loose hardware or other hazards.
- Try to replace the drop-side crib as soon as you can. Even though it may seem safe, the hardware can come loose and the side rail may become detached.

## Maintaining the Crib

- When putting the crib together, carefully read and follow all assembly instructions.
- Cover the mattress with a snug-fitting crib sheet.
- Check the crib often for loose or missing pieces.
- Remove any hanging toys or mobiles when the baby is able to get up on all fours.
- When your child can pull herself up or stand, adjust the mattress to its lowest position. The crib sides should be at least 26 inches above the mattress support to prevent falls.
- Check the manufacturer's instructions to know when your child will outgrow the crib.

## Safety Tips

- Place cribs and other nursery furniture away from windows, and keep cords from window blinds, shades and baby monitors out of reach. If possible, use cordless window coverings.
- Bare cribs are best. Do not put pillows, blankets, sleep positioners, bumper pads or stuffed toys in the crib with the baby. Use sleepers or sleep sacks instead of blankets to keep the baby warm.
- Never place a baby to sleep on a soft surface such as a water bed, sofa, soft mattress or pillow. Babies should sleep on their backs on a firm mattress.
- Crib tents and canopies are not safe to use over cribs.