



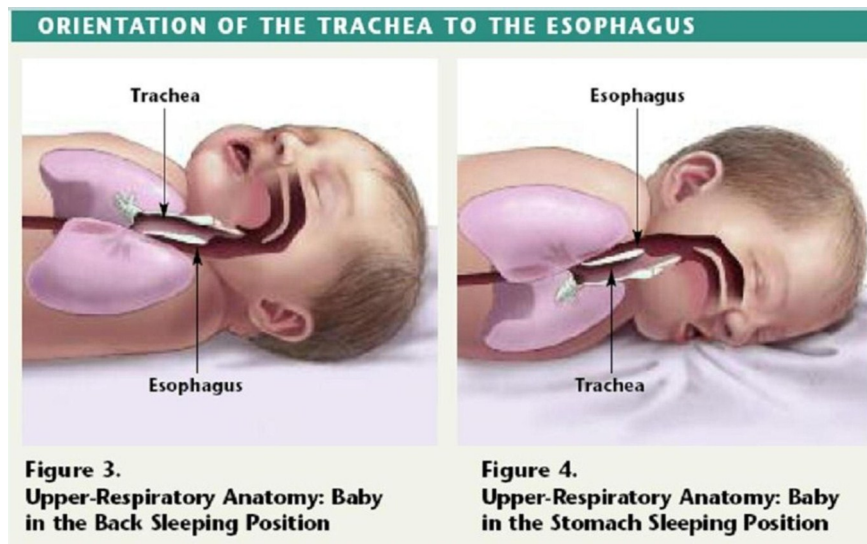
Because of

C O D Y ...

Common Concerns People Have with Putting Babies on Their Back to Sleep

Fear of Choking or Aspiration

- ~ Many people fear that babies who sleep on their backs are more likely to aspirate than babies who sleep on their stomachs.
- ~ People often misconstrue coughing or gagging for choking or aspiration, but it's actually evidence of a normal protective gag reflex.
- ~ Babies automatically swallow or cough up what it is they are throwing or spitting up while on their backs. This reflex operates to make sure the airway is always open.
- ~ It has been found that babies may clear secretions better when they sleep on their backs.
- ~ In the image below you can see that when a baby is sleeping on their back, the trachea (the wind pipe) lies on top of the esophagus (the food pipe). So, if the baby vomits or spits up it would have to work against gravity to be aspirated into the trachea. On the contrary, if a baby is sleeping on his or her stomach & they vomit or spit up, it will pool at the opening of the trachea, making it easier for the baby to aspirate.



Baby's Comfort

- ~ Some babies who sleep on their backs do not sleep as soundly & are fussier. But, **absence of very deep sleep protects babies against SIDS.**
- ~ Babies who sleep on their stomachs tend to react less to noise, move less, have longer periods of deep sleep & are harder to wake up. **All of these characteristics put babies at an increased rate of SIDS.**
- ~ Babies who sleep on their back also tend to flinch or jerk more in their sleep, this is called the **startle reflex**. This reflex is actually **protective** for the baby, prompting an exchange of fresh air or slight awakening from deep sleep. **Swaddling** with a thin blanket will **help** with this & make baby feel more **secure**.
- ~ Comfort is important, but baby's safety is **MORE IMPORTANT**. Babies should be put on their backs to sleep even if they seem to sleep less comfortably.

Flat Spots on Baby's Head

- ~ Flat spots are usually harmless. They often disappear within months after the baby learns to sit up, because frequent pressure to the back of the head decreases.
- ~ The best way to eliminate flat spots is to provide **Tummy Time** every day, while the baby is awake and being supervised.
- ~ **Other ways** that can prevent or help reduce flat spots is changing your baby's head position in the crib or changing the direction that the baby lies in the crib, holding your baby upright over one shoulder when he or she is not sleeping & avoiding too much time in car seats, swings, & bouncers while the baby is awake.