The use of Finnish “baby boxes” in the United States is gaining attention as a potential way to increase safe sleep for babies and reduce deaths among infants.

Finland’s baby box program
- Given to new moms in Finland since the 1930s.
- Pregnant women who visit a doctor or prenatal clinic before the 4th month of pregnancy receive a baby box.
- The baby box is a sturdy cardboard box with a snug fitting mattress where a baby can sleep.
- Infant deaths in Finland decreased after the baby box program began (from over 60 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 1945 to roughly 2.5 in 2016).
- Similar trends in infant mortality were seen across other countries suggesting that additional factors were at play (access to antibiotics, improvements in obstetric practice).

Reducing these deaths among infants requires a comprehensive, family-centered approach to safe sleep. Health care providers, early learning and public health professionals should work to engage caregivers in conversations about the following safe sleep recommendations:
- Always put your baby to sleep on his/her back on a firm sleep surface.
- Make sure no one smokes around your baby.
- Breastfeed your baby.
- Put your baby to sleep in the room where you sleep.
- Do not use pillows, blankets, stuffed toys or crib bumpers in your baby’s sleep area.
- Do not place your baby to sleep on soft things like couches or upholstered chairs, quilts or comforters.
- Talk with grandparents and other caregivers about safe sleep.
- Offer a pacifier at nap time and bedtime. Wait until breastfeeding is going well before offering a pacifier.
- Do not overheat or cover your baby’s head.

Baby Box Considerations

- The American Academy of Pediatrics has stated, “Currently, there is insufficient data on the role cardboard boxes play in reducing infant mortality.”
- The Consumer Product Safety Commission urges caution because baby boxes are currently not subject to any required safety standards.
- Several programs in the US are giving out baby boxes. The effects of these programs are being evaluated.
Sleep Related Deaths, 2015, Oregon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidental suffocation/strangulation in bed</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Oregon Vital Statistics

For more information on Safe Sleep including educational brochures and posters, go to: www.healthoregon.org/safesleep

**Safe Sleep for Babies**

Face up, face clear, smoke-free, baby near

Contact information:
Anna Stiefvater, RN, MPH
Perinatal Nurse Consultant
Anna.K.Stiefvater@state.or.us
971-673-1490

**Sleep-related infant deaths in Oregon and the US**

There are about 40 Sudden Unexpected Infant Deaths (SUID) in babies less than 1 year old every year in Oregon (see table). The three commonly reported types of SUID are:

- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Accidental suffocation and strangulation in bed (ASSB)
- Unknown cause.

In the U.S, the SUID rate from 1990 – 2014 decreased (see graph) after the American Academy of Pediatrics released its safe sleep recommendations in 1992 and the Back to Sleep campaign began in 1994.

**Significant differences exist between racial and ethnic groups** in the U.S. SUID rates are consistently higher for American Indian/Alaska Native infants, followed by non-Hispanic black infants.

Infant deaths from accidental suffocation and strangulation in bed have been increasing since 1997. These deaths can be caused by:

- suffocation by soft bedding
- another person rolling on top of or against the infant while sleeping
- the baby getting wedged or trapped between two objects
- strangulation


Source: CDC/NCHS National Vital Statistics System