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## Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine

### For Immediate Release

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### CPSC warning on slings misses the mark

*New Rochelle, NY, March 19, 2010* — The Consumer Products Safety Commission's warning on baby slings provides vague and misleading information for parents.

The popularity of slings has increased tremendously in recent years, as more and more mothers report that slings facilitate parenting and breastfeeding on demand. "All slings are not created equal," says Arthur Eidelman, MD, vice president of the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine. "Unfortunately, however, the CPSC issued a blanket warning about all types of sling carriers."

Ring slings, which carry infants in an upright position snug with the parent's chest, protect the infant's airway. By contrast, the illustrations of "unsafe" slings in the CPSC warning appear to be bag or duffel slings. In bag slings, the infant is carried near the parent's hips. In this position, the infant may be curled up and the neck may be bent, making breathing more difficult.

The CPSC's advice on safe baby carrying is also misleading. The agency recommends positioning infants so "the baby's head is facing up and is clear of the sling and the mother's body." "The face out position they say is correct could be risky with a premature infant, because of the baby's unsupported neck," Eidelman says. "A baby whose face is sideways with cheek against the chest, head slightly extended and body and shoulders and yes, face, snug so that the baby can't move, is secured in a safe position."

In the warning, the CPSC reported 14 deaths associated with sling use in the past 20 years, including 3 in 2009. The agency provided no information on the types or brands of sling involved, nor did they account for the rapid increase in sling use among parents in the US. This stands in contrast with the hundreds of recalls of other juvenile products issued by the CPSC that specify the precise brand and model number involved in adverse outcomes.

"Last month, when the CPSC recalled a crib model associated with 3 infant deaths, they did not issue a blanket warning that cribs can be deadly," Eidelman notes. "Parents deserve the same precise, accountable information when it comes to baby-carrying."

The [Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine](#) is a worldwide organization of physicians dedicated to the promotion, protection and support of breastfeeding and human lactation through education,

research, and advocacy. An independent, self-sustaining, international physician organization and the only organization of its kind, ABM's mission is to unite members of various medical specialties through physician education, expansion of knowledge in breastfeeding science and human lactation, facilitation of optimal breastfeeding practices, and encouragement of the exchange of information among organizations.

***Breastfeeding Medicine*** is the official journal of the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine. It is an authoritative, peer-reviewed, multidisciplinary journal published quarterly. The journal publishes original scientific papers, reviews, and case studies on a broad spectrum of topics in lactation medicine. It presents evidence-based research advances and explores the immediate and long-term outcomes of breastfeeding, including the epidemiologic, physiologic, and psychological benefits of breastfeeding.

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