



Sleep Safely!

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the unexplained sudden death of an infant under one year of age and is the leading cause of death in children between one month and one year of age.

About SIDS

- The peak time for SIDS deaths is 2-4 months, although it can and does occur later during the first year of life.
- SIDS victims appear to be in good health prior to death.
- SIDS causes no suffering -death occurs rapidly, usually during sleep.
- Vomiting and choking do not cause SIDS.
- Immunizations do not increase the risk of SIDS.
- SIDS is not contagious.
- There is no way to predict which babies will die from SIDS.
- Babies who are used to sleeping on their backs at home are 18 times more likely to die from SIDS when they are placed to sleep on their tummies by another caregiver.

Reducing the Risk

- The risk of SIDS is reduced by 40% by putting babies to sleep on their backs.
- Never put a baby to sleep on his or her tummy or side unless a doctor has instructed you to do so.
- If a child's parent or guardian claims that the child is a non-back sleeper, require a physician's note explaining why the baby should not sleep on his back, how he should be placed to sleep, and a time frame for following the doctor's instructions.
- Use safety-approved cribs and firm mattresses; cradles and bassinets that are JPMA certified for safety may also be used.
- Keep cribs neat and free of extra items, such as toys, stuffed animals, and excess bedding.
- Sleepers, sleep sacks, and wearable blankets are good alternatives to blankets.
- Sleep only 1 baby per crib.
- Keep the room at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
- Do not use wedges or infant positioners -there is no evidence that these reduce the risk of SIDS.
- Never allow smoking in a room where babies sleep, as exposure to secondhand smoke is linked to an increased risk of SIDS.
- Schedule supervised 'tummy time' for babies when they are awake to help them strengthen their muscles and develop normally.

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For more information, visit <http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/Sleep.cfm>.

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