A PARENTS' GUIDE TO SAFE SLEEP

Helping you to reduce the risk of SIDS

DID YOU KNOW?

- About one in five sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) deaths occur while an infant is in the care of someone other than a parent. Many of these deaths occur when babies who are used to sleeping on their backs at home are then placed to sleep on their tummies by another caregiver. We call this "unaccustomed tummy sleeping."
- Unaccustomed tummy sleeping increases the risk of SIDS. Babies who are used to sleeping on their backs and are placed to sleep on their tummies are 18 times more likely to die from SIDS.

You can reduce your baby's risk of dying of SIDS by talking to those who care for your baby, including child care providers, babysitters, family, and friends, about placing your baby to sleep on his back at night and during naps.

WHO IS AT RISK FOR SIDS?:

- SIDS is the leading cause of death for infants between 1 month and 12 months of age.
- SIDS is most common among infants that are 2-4 months old. However, babies can die of SIDS until they are 1 year old.

WHAT CAN I DO BEFORE MY BABY IS BORN TO REDUCE THE RISK OF SIDS?

Take care of yourself during pregnancy and after the birth of your baby. During pregnancy, before you even give birth, you can reduce the risk of your baby dying from SIDS! **Don't smoke or expose yourself to others' smoke while you are pregnant and after the baby is born.** Be sure to visit a physician for regular prenatal checkups to reduce your risk of having a low birth weight or premature baby. Breastfeed your baby, if possible, at least through the first year of life.

KNOW THE TRUTH... SIDS IS NOT CAUSED BY:

- Immunizations
- Vomiting or choking

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT BACK TO SLEEP?

- Be aware of safe sleep practices and how they can be made a part of our everyday lives.
- When shopping in stores with crib displays that show heavy quilts, pillows, and stuffed animals, talk to the manager about safe sleep, and ask them not to display cribs in this way.
- Monitor the media. When you see an ad or a picture in the paper that shows a baby sleeping on her tummy, write a letter to the editor.
- If you know teenagers who take care of babies, talk with them. They may need help with following the proper safe sleep practices.
- Set a good example – realize that you may not have slept on your back as a baby, but we now know that this is the safest way for babies to sleep. When placing babies to sleep, be sure to always place them on their backs.

IT IS EASY AND FREE TO MAKE SAFE SLEEP PRACTICES A PART OF YOUR DAILY LIFE.

This way, you will know that you are doing all that you can to keep your baby healthy and safe. Do your best to follow the guidelines above.

WHERE IS THE SAFEST PLACE FOR MY BABY TO SLEEP?

The safest place for your baby to sleep is in the room where you sleep. Place the baby's crib or bassinet near your bed (within an arm's reach). This makes it easier to breastfeed and to bond with your baby.

The crib or bassinet should be free from toys, soft bedding, blankets, and pillows. (See picture on next page.)

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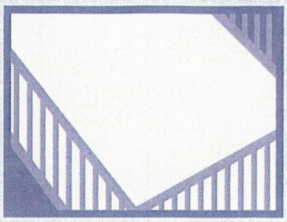
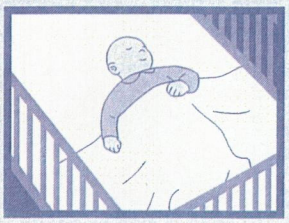
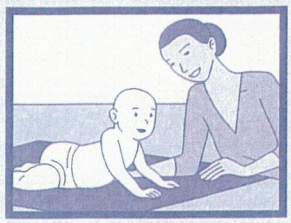
Face up to wake up – healthy babies sleep safest on their backs.



Do not place pillows, quilts, toys, or anything in the crib.



If a light blanket is needed, tuck all sides along bottom half of crib, below baby's arms.



Supervised tummy time during play is important to baby's healthy development.

HOW CAN I REDUCE MY BABY'S RISK?

Follow these guidelines to help you reduce your baby's risk of dying from SIDS.

SAFE SLEEP PRACTICES

- Always place babies to sleep on their backs during naps and at nighttime. Because babies sleeping on their sides are more likely to accidentally roll onto their stomach, the side position is not as safe as the back and is not recommended.
- Don't cover the heads of babies with a blanket or overbundle them in clothing and blankets.
- Avoid letting the baby get too hot. The baby could be too hot if you notice sweating, damp hair, flushed cheeks, heat rash, and rapid breathing. Dress the baby lightly for sleep. Set the room temperature in a range that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.

SAFE SLEEP ENVIRONMENT

- Place your baby in a safety-approved crib with a firm mattress and a well-fitting sheet (cradles and bassinets may be used, but choose those that are JPMA (Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association) certified for safety).
- Place the crib in an area that is always smoke free.
- Don't place babies to sleep on adult beds, chairs, sofas, waterbeds, or cushions.
- Toys and other soft bedding, including fluffy blankets, comforters, pillows, stuffed animals, and wedges should not be placed in the crib with the baby. These items can impair the infant's ability to breathe if they cover his face.
- Breastfeed your baby. Experts recommend that mothers feed their children human milk at least through the first year of life.

TALK ABOUT SAFE SLEEP PRACTICES WITH EVERYONE WHO CARES FOR YOUR BABY!

When looking for someone to take care of your baby, including a child care provider, a family member, or a friend, make sure that you talk with this person about safe sleep practices. Bring this fact sheet along to help, if needed. If a caregiver does not know the best safe sleep practices, respectfully try to teach the caregiver what you have learned about safe sleep practices and the importance of following these rules when caring for infants. Before leaving your baby with anyone, be sure that person agrees that the safe sleep practices explained in this brochure will be followed all of the time.

IS IT EVER SAFE TO HAVE BABIES ON THEIR TUMMIES?

Yes! You should talk to your child care provider about making tummy time a part of your baby's daily activities. Your baby needs plenty of tummy time while supervised and awake to help build strong neck and shoulder muscles. Remember to also make sure that your baby is having tummy time at home with you.

TUMMY TO PLAY AND BACK TO SLEEP

- Place babies to sleep on their backs to reduce the risk of SIDS. Side sleeping is not as safe as back sleeping and is not advised. Babies sleep comfortably on their backs, and no special equipment or extra money is needed.
- "Tummy time" is playtime when infants are awake and placed on their tummies while someone is watching them. Have tummy time to allow babies to develop normally.

If you have questions about safe sleep practices please contact Healthy Child Care America at the American Academy of Pediatrics at childcare@aap.org or 888/227-5409. Remember, if you have a question about the health and safety of your child, talk to your baby's doctor.

RESOURCES:

American Academy of Pediatrics
http://www.aappolicy.org
The Changing Concept of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome: Diagnostic Coding Shifts, Controversies Regarding the Sleeping Environment, and New Variables to Consider in Reducing Risk
http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/pediatrics;116/5/1245.pdf

Healthy Child Care America
http://www.healthychildcare.org

National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education
http://nrc.uchsc.edu

Healthy Kids, Healthy Care: A Parent Friendly Tool on Health and Safety Issues in Child Care
http://www.healthykids.us

National Institute for Child and Human Development Back to Sleep Campaign
Order free educational materials from the Back to Sleep Campaign at
http://www.nichd.nih.gov/sids/sids.cfm

First Candle/SIDS Alliance
http://www.firstcandle.org

Association of SIDS and Infant Mortality Programs
http://www.asip1.org

CJ Foundation for SIDS
http://www.cjsids.com

National SIDS and Infant Death Resource Center
http://www.sidscenter.org/

The Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association
http://www.jpma.org/

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

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