

Tips for Reducing the Risk of SIDS

- **Always** place the baby on his back to sleep. If he falls asleep while playing on his stomach, turn him over on his back to continue his rest.
- Place the baby on a firm mattress and remove all pillows, quilts, comforters, bumper pads, sheepskins, stuffed toys, and other soft items from the crib.
- Do not place the baby to sleep on a waterbed, sofa or chair, soft mattress, sleeping bag, pillow, or any other soft surface.
- Do not allow babies to share a crib, even if they are siblings or twins.
- Ask the parents to provide a sleeper garment. Dress the baby in it for sleep *instead* of covering him with a blanket or comforter.
- If you must use a blanket: (1) place the baby with his feet at the foot of the crib, (2) bring a thin blanket up only as far as his chest, and (3) tuck the blanket firmly under the crib mattress.
- Make sure that the baby's head stays **uncovered** while he sleeps.
- Do not let babies sleep in a room where smoking is allowed (even if no one smokes while the babies are in the room).
- Make the families you serve aware of the steps you take to reduce the risk of SIDS while caring for their children.

This fact sheet was created by the Infant Mortality Risk Reduction Work Team of the National SIDS & Infant Death Program Support Center (NSIDPSC).

You may copy or adapt it as long as you properly credit the source. For additional materials or multiple copies of this fact sheet, please contact us at 1-800-638-SIDS (7437) or visit our website at www.sids-id-psc.org.

The NSIDPSC is a cooperative project of the SIDS Alliance, Inc. and the Health Resources & Services Administration's (HRSA) Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Infant Death Program.

National SIDS & Infant Death Program Support Center



SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROME and THE CHILD CARE PROVIDER



Frequently Asked Questions About SIDS

Q: What Is SIDS?

A: Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the “sudden death of an infant under one year of age which remains unexplained after a thorough case investigation, including performance of a complete autopsy, examination of the death scene, and review of the clinical history.” SIDS is sometimes referred to as “crib death.” However, cribs with safe bedding that follow the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission’s recommendations are the *safest* places for an infant to sleep.

Q: How Often Does SIDS Happen?

A: Approximately 77 of every 100,000 babies born alive in the U.S. die of SIDS. The rate of SIDS varies from state to state. Contact the SIDS organization in your state to find out the rate in your area.

Q: What Causes SIDS?

A: The causes of SIDS are unknown at this time. However, research has identified a number of factors that indicate an increased risk of SIDS. This information has helped health professionals to develop SIDS risk reduction campaigns. The incidence of SIDS in the U.S. has dropped by 38% since 1992, when the risk reduction campaigns began.

More Questions About SIDS . . .

Q: Why Do I Need To Know About SIDS?

A: Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), or “crib death,” is one of the leading causes of infant death, accounting for nearly 3,000 deaths annually in the United States. Recent research suggests that 20% of SIDS deaths throughout the country occur when infants are in the care of someone other than their parents. Fourteen percent (14%) of deaths in the study occurred while the babies were in child care centers or family child care homes. Each year more women are joining the workforce and requiring child care. Therefore, this may increase the number of SIDS deaths occurring in child care settings.

In addition, child care providers who do not follow current recommendations for infant sleep position and bedding may be at risk for legal action if an infant dies of SIDS while in their care. The purpose of this fact sheet is to educate child care providers about SIDS and its risk factors, as well as to encourage providers to utilize resources offered by the National SIDS and Infant Death Program Support Center.



Q: What Can We Do To Decrease The Risk?

A: You should know and practice the simple “Tips for Reducing the Risk of SIDS” listed in this brochure. These risk reduction strategies are recommended by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, American Academy of Pediatrics, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Association of SIDS and Infant Mortality Programs, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Alliance.

Q: When SIDS Happens, Is There Always A Police Investigator?

A: Whenever there is an unexplained death, the law requires that an investigation be conducted to find out the cause. Several people may ask you for the same information. In addition to the police, your licensing and insurance agencies may also conduct investigations. These investigations may be hard for you and for others close to the child. Try to remember, however, that investigations serve three purposes:

- They help determine the cause of the baby’s death;
- They help us learn more about SIDS and other causes of infant death; and
- They confirm that no one is to blame for the baby’s death.



Q: Is There Anything Else We Can Do?

A: SIDS is unpredictable. Although we can take steps to reduce the risk, at present, there is no way to absolutely prevent SIDS. However, it is important that you (and your staff) know about SIDS and risk reduction. The best way to prepare is to:

- Identify your local SIDS program and add them to your list of important phone numbers.
- Take advantage of educational programs on risk reduction and emergency procedures (your local SIDS program may be able to provide training).
- Learn and/or maintain up-to-date certification in infant CPR and first aid.
 - Discuss infant sleep position with all parents.
 - Develop policies to address infant sleep position.
 - Conduct practice drills on emergency procedures for an unresponsive infant.
 - Contact the National SIDS & Infant Death Program Support Center or your local SIDS organization for additional information and materials.