BrightCourse FactSheet

SIDS

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, or SIDS, is how the medical community labels unexplained, thoroughly investigated deaths of infants less than twelve months old.

Sudden unexpected infant death (SUID) is a term used to describe the sudden and unexpected death of a baby less than 1 year old in which the cause was not obvious before investigation. These deaths often happen during sleep or in the baby's sleep area.[1]

Many studies about the causes of SIDS have netted the following guidelines to reduce your baby's risk.

- ALWAYS sleep your baby on her back.[2,3]
- Use a firm and flat sleeping surface in a safety-approved crib. Cover the firm mattress with a tightly fitted sheet. Do not use blankets, toys, crib bumpers, or extra padding.
- Never put your baby to sleep on soft, porous surfaces, including pillows, comforters, quilts, sheepskins, bean bags, or stuffed toys, waterbeds, or sofas.
- Have your child sleep in the same room, but never in the same bed, as you.[1,2,3]
- Do not smoke during pregnancy or around your infant after she is born.[8,9]

You can also further reduce the incidence of SIDS if you:

- Breastfeed your baby.[2]
- Offer a pacifier during naps and nighttime sleep.[2]
- Take care not to overheat your child by overdressing her.[10]
- Vaccinate your child.[12]

Be aware of your own fatigue when feeding your baby. Take precautions to provide a safe place to feed your baby in case you fall asleep. Always return your baby back to their crib as soon as you're awake.

Remember the practices of "Back to Sleep," maintaining safe sleeping areas, and keeping a smoke-free environment for your baby. Add to that breastfeeding, pacifiers, proper clothing, and vaccines, and your child's risk of SIDS will be greatly reduced.

Resources include:

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12. Vennemann MM, Höffgen M, Bajanowski T, Hense HW, Mitchell EA. Do immunisations reduce the risk for SIDS? A meta-analysis. Vaccine. 2007 Jun 21;25(26):4875-9.

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