



SIDS: Back to Sleep

Losing a baby to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is a tragedy that devastates parents, family members, friends, and others who care for the child. The good news is that all of those who provide care for an infant can help reduce the risk of sleep-related deaths.

What is SIDS?

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome is the cause given when an infant dies suddenly and no other cause can be found.

How can parents and caregivers lower the risk of SIDS?

Create a safe sleep space.

- Always place babies to sleep on their backs.
- Use a firm sleep surface with a tight-fitting sheet. Use only cribs, bassinets, portable cribs, or play yards manufactured after June 28, 2011, because these must meet federal requirements for overall crib safety. Parents also should check to make sure the product has not been recalled (www.cpsc.gov/recalls)
- Keep your child's crib bare, making sure it is free of crib bumpers, blankets, pillows, soft toys, or anything else that could obstruct his breathing.
- Infants should sleep in the same room as their parents for the first six months.
- Babies should not sleep alone on soft surfaces such as couches or recliners, and especially should not do so with any adult.
- Consider offering the baby a pacifier at nap time and bedtime.
- Do not use home monitors or commercial devices marketed to reduce the risk of SIDS.

Practice healthy behaviors.

- Avoid exposing babies to smoke during the pregnancy and after birth.
- Avoid alcohol and illicit drug use during pregnancy and after birth.
- Breastfeed the baby for at least six months.
- Infants should receive all recommended vaccinations.

What about “tummy time”?

Provide “tummy time” while the baby is awake and being observed. This can help motor development and help prevent flat spots from forming on the back of the baby's head. A baby can usually roll over alone around 4–5 months. After that, you will not need to keep moving the baby onto his back. Sleeping on the back and supervised play on the tummy are both good for infants.

The opinions, resources, and referrals provided in this tip sheet are intended for information purposes only and should not be considered or used as a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. We advise parents to seek the advice of a physician or other qualified health care provider with questions regarding their child's health or medical conditions.

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