

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Factsheet

What is SIDS?

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden and unexpected death of an otherwise healthy infant younger than one year old. It is the leading cause of death in children between one month and one year of age.

Sudden Infant Death in Kansas

- According to the most recent data from 2008, 303 Kansas infants died before their first birthdays, representing an infant mortality rate (IMR) of 7.25 deaths per 1,000 live births.
- Of the 303 Kansas infant deaths, 52 deaths were attributed to SIDS, or 17.2% of the infant deaths. This makes SIDS the leading cause of death among Kansas infants one month to one year of age.
- The incidence of SIDS is 2 times higher in the African American population.
- SIDS is most common among infants that are 2-4 months old.
- 67% of infants diagnosed with SIDS are found unresponsive in unsafe sleeping environments (in the prone position, in adult beds, in smoking environments, etc.).

What We Know About SIDS?

- The exact reason for SIDS is not certain, but it may be related to findings that suggest that an infant who sleeps on her stomach gets less oxygen or gets rid of carbon dioxide less because she is "rebreathing" the air from a small pocket of bedding pulled up around the nose.
- Recent findings also suggest that certain regions of the brain may be underdeveloped in babies who die from SIDS. When these sleeping babies encounter a situation challenging to their well-being, they may fail to wake up to remove themselves from danger.
- Research has shown various risk factors play a role in the health of babies in regards to SIDS.
- Babies who sleep on their tummies are at 5 times greater risk for SIDS.

- 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 are placed on their tummies. 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.
- Babies who breathe secondhand smoke are at 2.5 times greater risk for SIDS.

What We Can Do:

- Place a baby Alone, on the Back and in a Crib.
- Place baby on a firm, tight-fitting mattress in a crib with no loose bedding, pillows, blankets, sheepskins, stuffed toys, or other soft products.
- Create a smoke-free zone around the baby.
- Dress the baby in light sleep clothing.
- Use a fan to keep the room well ventilated.
- When shopping in stores with unsafe sleep environments displayed, ask them to display a safe sleep environment.
- 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 about 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.

Sources:

- A Parent's Guide to Safe Sleep (Copyright © American Academy of Pediatrics, Revised 2008): www.healthychildren.org
- Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Bureau of Public Health Informatics, Annual Summary: Deaths in 2008
- National Institute of Child Health and Human Development: www.nichd.nih.gov

To learn more go to:

- www.sidsks.org
- www.datacounts.net/infant_mortality/
- www.kdheks.gov/bcyf/infant_mortality_campaign.htm
- www.safesleepkansas.org