

Safe Sleep for Babies

What Can We Do To Reduce Sudden Infant Death?

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden and unexpected death of an otherwise healthy baby. SIDS is most common for infants two to four months of age who appear healthy, but die without warning during sleep. Health care providers don't know exactly what causes SIDS, however, research has shown various risk factors play a role in the health of babies in regards to SIDS, as well as there are certain things that can help reduce the risk of SIDS.

As a direct response to the alarming rate of infant mortality in Kansas, Safe Kids Kansas, The SIDS Network, and KDHE collaborated to create the *ABCs of Safe Sleep for Babies* (Alone, on the Back, in a Crib), a video to educate **EVERYONE** about safe sleep. Go to Safesleepkansas.org to view the video.

Creating Safe Sleep

- **Remember the ABCs of Safe Sleep** — A baby should always sleep alone, on the back and in a crib.
- **Always place babies on their backs to sleep for naps and at night.** Babies who sleep on their backs are less likely to die of SIDS than babies who sleep on their stomachs or sides.
- **Shared Room, Separate Bed.** The safest place for your baby to sleep is in the room where you sleep, but not in your bed. Place the baby's crib, bassinet or bedside co-sleeper near your bed (within an arm's reach). This makes it easier to breastfeed and to bond with your baby.
- **Place your baby on a firm sleep surface, such as a safety-approved crib mattress covered with a fitted sheet.** Never place a baby to sleep on a pillow, quilt, sheepskin, or other soft surface.
- **Create a smoke-free zone around the baby.**
- **Keep soft objects, toys, and loose bedding out of your baby's sleep area.** Don't use pillows, blankets, quilts, sheepskins, or pillow-like bumpers in your baby's sleep area. Keep all items away from the baby's face.

- **Avoid letting your baby overheat during sleep.** Dress your baby in light sleep clothing and keep the room at a temperature that is comfortable for an adult. Consider using a wearable blanket or other sleeper instead of a blanket to avoid the risk of overheating.
- **Think about using a clean, dry pacifier when placing your baby down to sleep,** but don't force the baby to take it. (If you're breastfeeding, wait until your child is 1 month old, or is used to breastfeeding before using a pacifier.)
- **Breastfeed your baby,** if possible, at least through the first year of life.
- **Back to Sleep, Tummy to Play** — Make 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.
- **Talk About Safe Sleep Practices With Everyone Who Cares For Your Baby!**

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.

Sources:

- A Parent's Guide to Safe Sleep (Copyright © American Academy of Pediatrics, Revised 2008): www.healthychildren.org
- 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