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SIDS REDUCTION

Safe Sleep Practices for Infants

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden death of a baby under one year of age where no other cause can be found. It was once called "crib death." SIDS is the most common cause of death for babies between one month and one year old. The highest risk is between 2 and 4 months. The cause of SIDS is not known, but it is more likely to happen to babies who sleep on their stomachs than to those who sleep on their backs.

When people in other countries began putting their babies on their backs to sleep, the number of SIDS deaths dropped. Since 1994, doctors in the United States have been telling parents to have their babies sleep on their backs. Because of this change, the number of babies in the US who die from SIDS is much lower now.

WHY SLEEP POSITIONING IS IMPORTANT

Much research has been done to find out the cause of SIDS, but doctors have not been able to find a cause. There's no way to predict or prevent SIDS. But doctors have found that babies who sleep on their bellies, have soft bedding, are kept too warm, or are ill are more likely to die of SIDS. Many parents worry that their baby will spit up and choke if he sleeps on his back. Doctors have not found this to be true. Babies who sleep on their backs do not have a greater chance of choking or other problems.

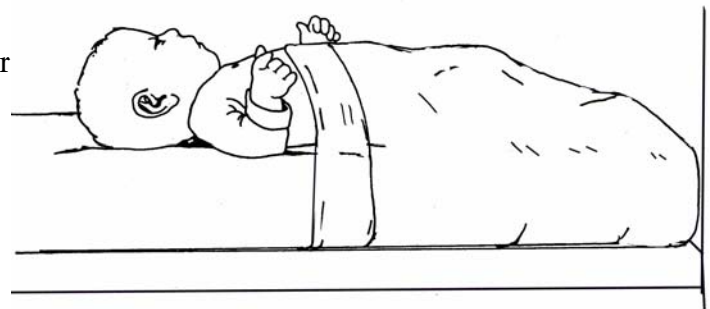
HOW TO POSITION YOUR BABY

Babies should sleep on their backs until they are 12 months of age. To keep babies on their backs, follow these steps:

You Will Need

- Firm crib mattress
- Lightweight blanket

1. Place your baby on his or her back.
2. Cover your baby with a light blanket and tuck the blanket under the mattress.



Picture 1 Babies should sleep on their backs until they are 12 months of age.

HOW TO POSITION YOUR BABY

- Always put your baby on his back for sleep. This includes night time sleep and all naps.
- If your baby has just been fed, make sure to burp your baby well before laying him down to sleep.
- To avoid making your baby too warm, use a light blanket to cover him while sleeping.
- **Never restrain your baby** to keep him in the back position.
- You do not need to check your baby often to make sure he stays off his belly. Most very young babies cannot roll onto their bellies when they are put on their backs.

OTHER SLEEP SAFETY TIPS

Along with using the back position for sleep, other things that help prevent SIDS include:

- Cribs should meet the safety standards of the Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- Use a firm surface for your baby's bed. **DO NOT let your baby sleep on a sofa, waterbed, beanbag chair, sheepskin, stuffed toys, cushion, comforter, pillow, or other soft material. Some infants have smothered while using these.**
- No quilts, comforters, bumper pads or other fluffy, loose bedding.
- **Take pillows, extra blankets, and all soft toys out of your baby's crib.**
- Don't put baby to bed with a hat or decorative headband.
- Babies who get too warm are more likely to die of SIDS. They may get too warm if they wear too much clothing or have too many blankets. Keep your baby's room at a temperature that is comfortable for you (68 to 72 degrees). Your baby will be warm enough with just a thin layer of clothing and a blanket over her.
- Do not let your baby sleep with older children or any adults. This increases the risk of the infant being smothered. However, if possible, the baby's crib should be in same room with you.

KEEPING YOUR BABY HEALTHY

- Keep your baby in a smoke-free environment. Do not smoke or allow others to smoke in your home. Keep baby away from people whose clothes smell of smoke.
- Breastfeed your baby if possible. This has been shown to decrease the risk of SIDS.
- You may offer a pacifier at bedtime to infants older than one month, but don't put it back in the mouth after baby falls asleep.
- Make sure your baby gets all immunizations on time.
- If your baby seems sick, call the doctor or clinic for advice or an appointment.
- Get good prenatal care during pregnancy.
- Place baby on his stomach *while he is awake and you can watch him*. This helps develop neck muscles and good head control.



If you have any questions about sleeping positions for your baby, be sure to ask your baby's doctor or nurse.