

SIDS:

Why Reading This Could Save an Infant's Life

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For more than 14 years now, the American Academy of Pediatrics has recommended that infants be placed to sleep on their backs, to prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome or SIDS. The Back-To-Sleep message has cut the number of SIDS deaths in the United States almost in half. But it has also resulted in some children having slightly flattened heads from the constant pressure on the back of their skull. This won't harm your baby, but it can look a little strange. To decrease the chance of bony changes, make sure baby gets plenty of supervised “tummy time” while awake. Don't let baby sit around the house in a car seat for long periods of time. And try to alternate your baby's head position every night – one night to the left, the next night to the right. Back-To-Sleep saves babies' lives – and that's worth a few adjustments.

About 1 in 5 sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) deaths occur while an infant is in the care of someone other than a parent or usual caregiver. SIDS is defined as the sudden death of an infant less than 1 year of age, which remains unexplained after a thorough case investigation, including performance of

a complete autopsy, examination of the death scene, and review of the clinical history.

“Unaccustomed tummy sleeping” is when a baby who is used to sleeping on their back with one caregiver and is then placed to sleep on their tummy by another caregiver. Unaccustomed tummy sleeping greatly increases the risk of SIDS. Babies who are used to sleeping on their backs and then placed to sleep on their tummies are 18 times more likely to die from SIDS compared to babies who are placed to sleep on their backs every time, with every caregiver.

- Side sleeping is not as safe as the back as babies are more likely to accidentally roll onto their tummies.
- Place the baby in a safety-approved crib with a firm mattress and a well-fitting sheet.
- Do not place toys or other soft bedding (including fluffy blankets, comforters, pillows, stuffed animals, and wedges) into the crib with the baby.
- Avoid letting the baby get too hot. Dress baby appropriately for sleep and keep

the room temperature comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.

- Do not cover the baby's head with a blanket or over bundle with clothing and blankets.
- Consider using sleep clothing, such as sleepers, sleep sacks, and wearable blankets, as alternatives to blankets.
- Infant positioners or wedges do not reduce risk of SIDS.
- Keep the environment smoke free and never smoke around the baby.
- Do not allow baby to sleep on an adult bed, chair, sofa, waterbed, or cushion.
- Do not let the baby share a bed with other children.
- Do not let the baby sleep in bed with you. Return the baby to the crib.
- Give the baby supervised tummy time while awake to help strengthen muscles and development.
- Place the baby to sleep on their back every night and for every nap.
- Share this information with anyone who may care for the baby.

For more information or to schedule an appointment please call 605-665-5538.