

January/February 2014

SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Safe Sleep Practices

There have been major decreases in the incidence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) since the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) first released its recommendations for sleep practices in 1992. However, since 2005, there has been a plateau in the decrease of SIDS and an increase in Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID). These deaths include suffocation, asphyxia, entrapment, and ill-defined or unspecified causes of death. Therefore, it continues to be important to not only focus on SIDS but to focus on a safe sleep environment that reduces risk of all sleep-related deaths.

While no one knows exactly what causes SIDS death, it is widely known that safe sleep practices reduce the risk of SIDS and other infant and toddler deaths. Researchers have utilized data collected by Missouri's Child Fatality Review Program finding their data and information an important resource. These researchers have concluded that educating parents and caregivers on safe sleep

practices has the potential to save many lives.

With this in mind, the following is a compiled list of recommendations for safe sleep practices from the AAP and other sources (linked on the right):

- Back to sleep for every sleep. Always place your baby on their back to sleep until they are 1 year old.
- Always use a firm sleep surface. A firm mattress with a fitted sheet is recommended to reduce SIDS. Car seats and other sitting devices are not recommended for routine sleep.



If you use a blanket, place the baby with feet at the end of the crib. The blanket should reach no higher than the baby's chest. Tuck the ends of the blanket under the crib mattress to ensure safety.

- Baby should sleep in the same room as the parents, but not in the same bed. (Room sharing without bed sharing.)
- Keep soft objects or loose bedding out of the crib to reduce SIDS, suffocation, entrapment, and strangulation. This includes pillows, blankets, and bumper pads.
- Wedges and petitioners should not be used.
- Sleep only one baby per crib.
- Pregnant women should receive regular prenatal care.
- Avoid smoke exposure during pregnancy and after birth.
- Breast feeding is recommended.
- Avoid alcohol and illicit drug use during pregnancy and after birth.
- Consider offering a pacifier at nap and bedtime.

Special Points of Interest

- [SIDS and Other Sleep Related Infant Deaths: Expansion...](#)
- [NICHD Back to Sleep Campaign](#)
- [Parent Information for Reducing Risk](#)
- [Tummy Time](#)
- [Pediatrics - Official Journal of AAP](#)
- [Reduce the Risk of SIDS](#)
- [Safe Crib Safe Sleep](#)

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Safe Sleep Practices Cont.

- Avoid covering the infant's head and/or overheating.
- Do not use home monitors or commercial devices marketed to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- Infants should be immunized. Evidence suggests SIDS can be reduced by immunizations up to 50%.

Therefore, as research continues to find safer sleep practices; it is necessary for both parents and child care providers to utilize these latest practice recommendations.

Dr. Rachel Moon, MD; chair of the AAP SIDS task force reports the need for more

education for health care providers and trainings on how to prevent suffocation deaths to reduce SIDS and SUID.

There are some on-line trainings available for both parents and caregivers. The Michigan Department of Human Services has on-line training for professionals available called; [Infant Safe Sleep On-line Training](#) or you can utilize the link for [Reducing Risk of SIDS Training](#) specified more for parent/caretakers.

Instructions for the free training course are in the middle of the page.

So with all the safe sleep recommendations, you may be wondering if tummy time is still recommended. The answer is yes and it is also recommended! "Tummy time" is for playtime and is suggested to happen daily when infants have someone watching them and can be placed on their tummies while awake to play. The purposes of "tummy time" are to:

- Promote normal development;
- Minimize the occurrence of flat head, caused by babies being placed only on their backs;
- Improves baby's motor skills.

Other ways to prevent flat spots are by utilizing "cuddle time," limiting time in car seats, bouncers and swings; and by changing the direction your baby lies in their crib from week to week.

Links to Safe Sleep Brochures and Flyers

- [Safe Sleep Poster](#)
- [Safe Sleep RC 2013](#)
- [A Parents Guide to Safe Sleep](#)
- [A Childcare Providers Guide to Safe Sleep](#)
- [Tummy Time](#)
- [Back to Sleep for Babies in Foster Care](#)
- [Bare is Best - Babies Sleep Environment](#)

Remember always place babies on their backs to sleep, and offer a pacifier as protective effects have been reported.

