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Can Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Be Prevented?

By Debbie Walker

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden death during sleep of an apparently healthy child, under the age of one. A diagnosis of SIDS can only be applied after adequate post mortem investigations reveal no other causes. SIDS could be said to be a sudden death during sleep for no apparent reason.

It is impossible to predict if a child will succumb to SIDS. Medical research has failed to pinpoint a single exact cause but it has indicated various "risk factors" Knowing where the risk are can help you to eliminate them and thereby reduce the risk of SIDS by up to 75%. Use these guidelines to help provide a safe sleep environment for your baby.

*Put your baby to sleep on his back. The back to sleep campaign is thought to have reduced Sudden Infant deaths by between 50 – 75%. This is fairly new advice. Older mums (like me!) were probably told to put babies to sleep on their stomachs. However, medical opinion is unanimous. Putting baby to sleep on his/her back is the single most important thing you can do to prevent SIDS.

*Use a firm Mattress with a fitted sheet. Do not put baby to sleep (even for a nap) on soft surfaces such as water beds, sofa cushions, sheepskins or sleeping bags.

*Remove all soft things from the crib/sleep area Take away fluffy blanket, pillows, soft toys, duvets etc

*Keep baby's face uncovered. Make sure that baby's face stays uncovered and that blankets cannot shuffle up during the night. It is better to use sleep clothing rather than blankets. If you do use blanket make sure that you place baby at the foot of the crib (with his feet to the bottom) and the blanket firmly tucked under the mattress and no higher than baby's chest.

Do not smoke Do not smoke during pregnancy and do not allow others to smoke round your baby.

*Sleep near to your baby. It is suggested that you should keep baby in the parent's bedroom until 6 months old. It is NOT intended that you share a bed with your infant. It is hard to follow the SIDS prevention rules in an adult bed. The mattress is usually too soft and the pillows and fluffy bedding

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provide additional risks.

*If you use a pacifier for sleep or nap times do not reinsert it once baby is asleep

*Do not allow your baby to overheat. The room should be at a temperature that is comfortable for an adult. Do not use too many clothes or blankets.

*Make sure everyone knows these prevention tips. Some of this advice is new (especially back to sleep) and older carers may not know. It is important that everyone who looks after your baby is aware of the steps to keep your baby safe.

Lack of sleep is one of the hardest aspects of new parenthood. Getting baby off to sleep can be a major headache. The primary goal is to get baby off to sleep quickly – and to sleep safely through the night. Debbie Walker runs

<http://www.sleep-baby-sleep.com>

an advice website.

Infant Sleep Safety – Lessening the Dangers of Cot Death

By Chris Towland

SIDS (or Cot Death as it is known in the UK), is the greatest recognized cause of death in babies under the age of 12 months. This frightening condition happens while the infant is asleep. Unfortunately, so far there unfortunately isn't a known cure, or even a known reason in fact, as to why some babies are affected by the syndrome while others aren't. It is a fact though that over 2,500 a baby die in America annually from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Even though the number of baby deaths have been reduced by approximately 40 percent by the instigation of preventative measures and including baby sleep safety techniques to protect babies from SIDS, there unfortunately isn't a way at present to fully evade the occurrence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Tips for Baby Sleep Safety

*Ensure your child sleeps on his or her back. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome has been closely linked to children sleeping on their tummies.

*Ensure your baby sleeps on a firm mattress. Avoid types of fluffy toys or baby pillows that could cause suffocation.

*Don't let your infant get too hot throughout the night. A baby has a body temperature that is higher than an adult and so don't need so many blankets – so don't let infant be cold either though!

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*Don't take drugs, drink alcohol or smoke either before or after your baby's birth. Smoke from cigarettes is known to be a contributing factor to SIDS.

*Join in with early and parental care clinics, particularly if you are a parent for the first time.

*Breast feed Infant if it is at all possible. Breast fed babies are statistically not as likely to be affected by SIDS.

*Offer your child a pacifier in the first 12 months of life. It is not known why but a baby that are given a pacifier during this time are not as likely to be claimed by Cot Death.

*so don't sleep with Infant in the same bed or let Infant sleep in a normal adult bed. A baby has an increased risk of suffocating when in a bed that has been designed for adults. It is ok though to comfort and feed Infant in bed as long as he or she is taken back to his or her own cot afterwards.

SIDS is not the same as any other disease or syndrome. Most conditions surrounding a child's death are diagnosed by A symptoms associated with the death. Cot Death however is only diagnosed once other possibilities are dismissed.

Risk Factors

There are a number of specific trends or notable risk factors that can be observed in data regarding

SIDS. All of these risks should be noted and addressed by mothers and fathers that have a baby in a high-risk category.

*Boys are more likely than girls to die from SIDS. There is relatively little that can be done about this fact, it is simply included here as a notation.

*Drinking alcohol, smoking and drug use are understood to be three of the main contributory factors to Cot Death. In simple terms, if you value the health of your baby, keep away from unhealthy drugs like these!

*Poor parental care. First-time or young parents are the greatest risk. However, if a parent ensures they get early and frequent parental care checks and also have the backing of friends and family, the risk of this happening is significantly reduced.

*Babies born prematurely are at an increased Dangers of SIDS. Premature babies at birth have a disadvantage initially with and can often be quite fragile and under developed. This is once again more of a note than a specific prevention.

*Mothers who are younger than twenty are at Dangers of having an infant die from Cot Death. This can be for a cross-section of reasons such as simple inexperience or accidental neglect.

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By using the tips above and ensuring that you are aware of the dangers and also implementing the infant sleep safety precautions you can lessen the likelihood of losing a baby to SIDS. For parents who have lost a baby to Cot Death there are several excellent support groups available to assist in going through the process of grieving.

Chris is the webmaster of

www.infantsleep.info

which gives a wealth of information, help and advice on

infant sleep problems



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