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**Some Unusual Causes Of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)**

**By Lucky Balaraman**

On the list of horrifying things that can happen to a family, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is near the top. SIDS occurs when a baby between the ages of one and six months mysteriously dies in its sleep.

There are several causes for SIDS, and more are being discovered each year. Being suffocated by bedding is certainly one of them, as is being rolled on by parents and being a passive infant smoker.

But there are two other reasons responsible for a significant number of unexplained infant deaths.

Before World War Two, the number of SIDS (also called 'Crib Death') incidences was not very high. There was a dramatic increase in the number after the War, and it took quite a while for researchers to identify the cause.

Post-war, the industrially developed nations promulgated laws saying that crib mattresses had to be made fire retardant. Manufacturers achieved this by adding fire retarding chemicals to the mattress, which was a perfectly logical thing to do.

However, strange and deadly consequences resulted from this. Common household bacteria and fungi such as *scopulariopsis brevicaulis* ate the fire-retardants (which were often antimony, phosphorus or arsenic) and emanated gaseous derivatives of the toxic phosphine (PH<sub>3</sub>), arsine (AsH<sub>3</sub>)[4] and stibine (SbH<sub>3</sub>) gases.

These gases are more lethal than some of the well-known nerve gases used by irresponsible countries in military warfare. Carbon monoxide is but a feeble joke compared to them.

Body heat is what triggered the fungi to act. When urine, saliva and vomit leached into the mattress, the process went into high gear and even more gases were generated.

These gases rose out of the mattress and formed a layer. If there was insufficient air circulation in the room, or if the crib had solid, raised sides, this layer resided on the surface of the mattress where the

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baby lay. The baby was thus enveloped in a cloud of poison.

This phenomenon, which frequently occurs in the present day, also explains why SIDS reduces if babies sleep on their backs (as advocated by the American Academy of Pediatrics 13 years ago), because in that case they do not have their noses in the deadly gaseous soup.

The remedy for this toxic gas problem is to create an impermeable barrier between the baby and the mattress, most simply achieved by wrapping the mattress with polyethylene sheet. The top and sides should be covered by folding down a single sheet, then folding it again under the mattress and fixing it there with sticking tape.

The bottom should not be airtight.

Alternatively, readymade polyethylene slip-on mattress covers are inexpensively available from standard supply sources.

Statistics have shown that such mattress-wrapping dramatically reduced the incidence of SIDS.

It would also help to keep the head of the crib at a higher level than the foot, so that the gases are drained away from the baby's head area.

The second significant cause of SIDS is vaccination. This cause is exemplified by the shocking example of a 17-month old, active girl who was given DPT, MMR and Hib vaccines in one sitting, only to die the same night.

It is therefore worthwhile considering avoiding these vaccines to the extent feasible.

This article is for information purposes only. Do not take any decisions relating to your baby's health without the concurrence of a competent pediatrician.

Lucky Balaraman is the editor of Magnificent Babies, a pathbreaking online magazine on baby care at

<http://magnificentbabies.com>

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### **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

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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 have 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!

\*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.

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\*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.

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](http://www.infantsleep.info)

which gives a wealth of information, help and advice on

infant sleep problems

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