



Central Michigan District Health Department
For more information, please call: (989) 773-5921 ext. 109
2012 E. Preston Avenue, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48858, www.cmdhd.org

People Caring for People

To: Local Media
From: Alison Fegan, Health Educator
Date: September 2006
Re: Baby Safety

Safe Sleep for Your Baby

What is SIDS? SIDS stands for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. This term describes the sudden unexplained death of an infant younger than 1 year of age. SIDS is the leading cause of death in infants between 1 month and 1 year of age. Most SIDS deaths happen when babies are between 2 months and 4 months of age.

Health care providers don't know exactly what causes SIDS, but they do know: *Babies sleep safer on their backs.* Babies who sleep on their stomachs are much more likely to die of SIDS than babies who sleep on their backs; *Sleep surface matters.* Babies who sleep on or under soft bedding are more likely to die of SIDS; *Every sleep time counts.* Babies who usually sleep on their backs but who are placed on their stomachs, like for a nap, are at very high risk for SIDS. So it's important for everyone who cares for your baby to use the back to sleep position for naps and at night.

There are several ways that you and others who care for your baby can reduce the risk of SIDS.

Safe Sleep Tips

- **Always place your baby on his or her back to sleep for naps and at night.** The back sleep position is the safest.
- **Place your baby on a firm sleep surface, such as on a safety-approved crib mattress, covered by a fitted sheet.** Never place your baby to sleep on pillows, quilts, or other soft surfaces.
- **Keep soft objects, toys, and loose bedding out of your baby's sleep area.** Don't use pillows, blankets, quilts, and pillow-like bumper pads in your baby's sleep area, and keep any other items away from your baby's face.
- **Do not allow smoking around your baby.** Don't smoke before or after the birth of your baby, and don't let others smoke around your baby.
- **Keep your baby's sleep area close to, but separate from, where you and others sleep.** Your baby should not sleep in a bed or on a couch or armchair with adults or other children, but he or she can sleep in the same room as you. If you bring the baby into bed with you to breastfeed, put him or her back in a separate sleep area, such as a bassinet, crib or cradle.

- **Think about using a clean, dry pacifier when placing the infant down to sleep, but don't force the infant to take it.**
- **Do not let your baby overheat during sleep.** Dress your baby in light sleep clothing and keep the room at a temperature that is comfortable to you.
- **Reduce the chance that flat spots will develop on your baby's head by providing "Tummy Time."** Place babies on their stomachs when they are awake and someone is watching. Tummy Time helps your baby's head, neck, and shoulder muscles get stronger and help to prevent flat spots on the head.

Health care providers used to think that babies should sleep on their stomachs, but research now shows that babies are less likely to die of SIDS when they sleep on their backs. Placing your baby on his or her back to sleep is the number one way to reduce the risk of SIDS.

Make sure everyone who cares for your baby knows the Safe Sleep Tips! Tell grandparents, baby sitters, childcare providers, and other caregivers to always place your baby on his or her back to sleep, to reduce the risk of SIDS. Babies who usually sleep on their backs but who are placed on their stomachs, even for a nap, are at very high risk for SIDS – so every sleep time counts.

For more information on sleep positions for babies and reducing the risk of SIDS, contact the Back to Sleep campaign at: 1-800-505-2742 or visit their website at www.nichd.nih.gov/SIDS.

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department which serves the residents of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon Counties.