



• Helping Babies Survive & Thrive •

# FACTS ON SIDS/SUID

## SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROME

## SUDDEN UNEXPECTED INFANT DEATH

*Revised August 2010*

- SIDS is the sudden, unexpected death of an apparently healthy baby under one year of age that remains unexplained after the performance of a complete postmortem investigation, including an autopsy, examination of the scene of death and review of the medical history.
- As a result of the national Back to Sleep campaign launched in 1994 as a joint effort between First Candle, the American Academy of Pediatrics and National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, SIDS rates have declined by more than 50 percent.
- Despite this success, SIDS is still the leading cause of death for babies one month to one year of age, claiming more than 2,200 lives each year.
- While SIDS occurs in all socio-economic, racial and ethnic groups, African American and Native American babies are 2-3 times more likely to die of SIDS than Caucasian babies.
- Most SIDS deaths occur when a baby is between 2 and 4 months old; 90 percent of all SIDS deaths occur before 6 months of age.
- Most babies that die of SIDS appear to be healthy prior to death.
- 60 percent of SIDS victims are male; 40 percent are female.
- Despite awareness campaigns promoting the back sleep position and other safe sleep practices, there continues to be more than 4,500 SUID every year. Experts feel that as many as 80 – 90 percent of these deaths are the result of unsafe sleep practices such as bed sharing, use of soft bedding and stomach sleep position.
- Other causes of SUID include: inherited metabolic disorders, genetic cardiac disorders, infection, and intentional suffocation.

**At this time there is no known way to prevent all sudden infant deaths, but there are lifesaving steps parents and caregivers can take to help protect their baby from SIDS and SUID, including suffocation and accidents during sleep.**

- Babies should **always** be placed to sleep on their backs. Side and tummy sleep positions are not safe.
- Do not fall asleep with a baby in an adult bed or on a sofa. Bring them in bed to breastfeed and bond, but when it's time to fall asleep, place them alongside your bed in a separate, safe sleep space.
- Do not smoke while you are pregnant and do not expose babies to second-hand smoke after they are born. New research also warns of the dangers of third-hand smoke, the chemicals left behind on clothing, in homes and in cars.
- For sleep, use a safety-approved crib with a firm mattress that fits snugly and is covered with only a tight-fitting crib sheet. Play yard style cribs are also a good choice. Place your baby's separate, safe sleep space alongside where you sleep for at least the first six months.
- Do not place babies to sleep on soft surfaces such as adult beds, waterbeds, sofas, chairs, quilts, and sheepskins.
- Do not use loose blankets in a baby's crib. Layer clothing or use a wearable blanket or other type sleeper to keep baby warm AND safe during sleep.
- Remove all soft bedding and other soft items from the sleep area, including soft or pillow-like bumpers, before placing the baby to sleep.
- Do not use positioners or wedges to prop your baby or keep him on his back. These products have not been tested for their ability to keep babies on their backs or for their safety.
- Take care not to overheat babies with too much clothing or too warm of room. Keep temperature at what would be comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
- Use a pacifier at naptime and nighttime for the first year.
- Educate everyone you know who cares for babies about these important safety tips!

For more information call 1.800.221.7437 or visit [www.firstcandle.org](http://www.firstcandle.org).