

Revised July 2009

Unfortunately, at the current time, no vaccination exists that will prevent SIDS. Conversely, ***no vaccination has ever been found to cause SIDS***. SIDS has been documented to occur in infants who never received any immunizations. In addition, it should be noted that the peak incidence period for SIDS – between 2 and 4 months of age – also occurs in countries with different immunization schedules. Because of the coincidence in time frame between the recommended schedule for shots in the U.S. and the peak incidence of SIDS, a number of federal studies during the 1980's sought to correlate a causal relationship between the two, without success. Findings from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) multi-center, case control study (published in April of 1987) revealed that only 2 of 145 SIDS victims had received a DPT shot within 24 hours of death. Ongoing studies into SIDS and vaccinations continue to confirm earlier findings.

In addition, claims that immunizations increase the risk of SIDS are not supported by the scientific data. ***Immunization has not been isolated as a risk factor for SIDS and, in fact, babies who receive their scheduled shots are less likely to die of SIDS***. Maintaining immunization schedules contributes to the overall health and well being of the vast majority of children. Most reactions to the vaccines are usually mild. While we are aware that serious adverse outcomes such as high fever, seizures, convulsions and even death – though rare – may occur in a very few children, ***the risk of leaving a child unprotected against such dangerous diseases as tetanus or whooping cough is thousands of times greater than any risk posed by using the vaccines***.

It is on this basis, and ongoing studies in this area, that First Candle/SIDS Alliance continues to support the American Academy of Pediatrics and NICHD position that urges new parents to follow proper immunization schedules for their babies. According to studies as recently as 2001, thousands of children in the U.S. will develop serious illnesses such as measles and mumps each year that could have been prevented by immunizations. Pertussis, or whooping cough, infected 2, 835 children and caused 17 deaths in 2001 alone. Many parents may not know that immunizations must begin in infancy. Children who lag behind in getting immunizations are at risk of getting sick and may spread serious diseases to others. In order to obtain the safest, most effective results from the immunizations, babies must gradually be exposed to the vaccines starting from an early age, as outlined in current immunization schedules.