

**Sudden Infant Death Syndrome** is the sudden, unexpected death of an apparently healthy infant under one year of age that remains unexplained after the performance of a complete postmortem investigation, including an autopsy, an examination of the scene of death and a 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/SIDS Alliance, 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 remains the leading cause of death for infants one month to one year of age, continuing to claim the lives of more than 2,100 babies 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.

At this time there is no known way to prevent SIDS in all cases, but there are steps parents and caregivers can take to reduce the risk of sudden infant death:

- Always place babies on their **BACK** at nap and nighttime. Side and tummy sleep positions are not safe choices.
- 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 area.
- You should not smoke while you are pregnant and babies should not be exposed to second-hand smoke after they are born.
- For sleep, use a safety-approved crib with a firm, tight-fitting mattress, covered by only a sheet. Place your baby's safe sleep area alongside your bed for at least the first six months to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- Do not place babies to sleep on soft surfaces (adult beds, waterbeds, sofas, chairs, quilts, sheepskins).
- Do not use 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 crib (including soft or pillow-like bumpers) before placing the baby to sleep.
- Take care not to overheat babies with too much clothing. Keep room temperature at what would be comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
- Use a pacifier at nap and nighttime for the first year.
- Educate everyone you know who cares for babies about these important safety tips.

**For more information, please contact First Candle at  
800.221.7437 or visit us on the web at [www.firstcandle.org](http://www.firstcandle.org)**