

Putting Your Baby to Bed: What's Best

What is SIDS?

SIDS, stands for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. It is the sudden and unexplained death of a baby under 1 year of age.

Facts About SIDS

Doctors and nurses do not know what causes SIDS, but they do know:

- SIDS is the leading cause of death in babies after 1 month of age.
- Most SIDS deaths happen in babies who are between 2 and 4 months old.
- More SIDS deaths happen in colder months.
- Babies placed to sleep on their stomachs are much more likely to die of SIDS than babies placed on their backs to sleep.
- African-American babies are 2 times more likely to die of SIDS than white babies.

Even though there is no way to know which babies might die of SIDS, there are *some things that you can do to make your baby safer*.

- Always place your baby on his or her back to sleep, even for naps.

This is the safest sleep position for a healthy baby to reduce the risk of SIDS.

- Place your baby on a firm mat-



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tress, such as one in a safety-approved crib.

Research has shown that placing a baby to sleep on soft mattresses, sofas, sofa cushions, waterbeds, sheepskins, or other soft surfaces can increase the risk of SIDS.

(For more information on crib safety guidelines, place a call to the Consumer Product Safety Commission at 1-800-638-2772 or visit the commission's web site at www.cpsc.gov.)

- Remove soft, fluffy and loose bedding and stuffed toys from your baby's sleep area.

Make sure you keep all pillows, quilts, stuffed toys, and other soft items away from your baby's sleep area.

- Make sure your baby's face and head stay uncovered during sleep.

Keep blankets and other coverings away from your baby's mouth and nose. Dressing the baby in sleep clothing will avoid having to use any covering over the baby. If you do use a blanket or another covering, make sure that the baby's feet are at the bottom of the crib, the blanket is no higher than the baby's chest, and the blanket is tucked in around the bottom of the crib mattress.

- Do not allow smoking around your baby.

Don't smoke before or after the birth of your baby and make sure no one smokes around your baby.

- Don't let your baby get too warm during sleep.

Keep your baby warm during sleep, but not too warm. Your baby's room should be at a temperature that is comfortable for an adult. Too many layers of clothing or blankets can overheat your baby.

- Make sure everyone who cares for your baby knows to place your baby on his or her back to sleep.

Talk to childcare providers, grandparents, babysitters and all caregivers about SIDS risk.

Enjoy your baby!

To find out more information check out *The National Institute of Child Health & Human Development* at: <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/>

Protecting Your Teenager

Protecting your teenager means primarily knowing who they are with and what they are doing. This takes a smart parent to be able to keep up with this challenge while not driving the teen

crazy thinking you are hovering or being nosy!

Monitoring teens means assuring that they are involved in healthy activities and that you can account for their time.

Help your teen to find special interests and peers who share these interests by participating in group activities and organizations.

- Look into special peer discussion, education groups, and classes at boy's and girl's clubs, churches and synagogues.
- Make it easy and tempting for your teen to entertain friends at

Make it easy and tempting for your teen to entertain friends at home when you're there to supervise

home when you're there to supervise. This can increase his self-esteem and help you to learn who his friends are. Provide snacks and a place for them to talk while you are not far away.

- Get to know your teen's friends' parents. That way you can unite over matters of curfew and other limits, counteracting your teens arguments that everyone else is allowed to do this or that.

Friends are vital to teens. With your help and support, your teenager can have friendships that enhance his life immensely.

Parenting teens can be difficult, but not insurmountable. Keep the door for communication open looking for times when you both are calm to address things that are meaningful to both of you. For additional information see: "Parenting Teens" by Dr. Karen DeBord at:

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/fcs/humandev/pubs/parteens.html>

Adapted from "Helping Your Teen to Find a Positive Peer Group" by Kathleen McCoy, Ph.D.



Matthias Wesemeyer Photo

Let's Talk Month

October is "Let's Talk" Month which seeks to convey an important message: parents are the primary sexuality educators of their children. This responsibility is fulfilled through increased communication between parents and their children about sexuality and related issues.

For more information check out the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Coalition of North Carolina (APPCNC) at <http://www.appcnc.org/>

