

RECOMMENDATIONS TO REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROME

The American Academy of Pediatrics Task Force on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome has recently released its revised policy statement on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and provided guidance on evidence based best practices to reduce the risk of SIDS. The following is a summary of the recommendations:

- ❖ Infants should be placed for sleep on their backs for every sleep. Side sleeping is not advised.
- ❖ A firm crib mattress, covered by a sheet is the recommended sleeping surface.
- ❖ Keep soft objects and loose bedding out of the crib. Pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys and other soft objects should be kept out of an infant's sleeping environment. Loose bedding may be hazardous.
- ❖ Do not smoke during pregnancy. Avoid exposing an infant to second hand smoke.
- ❖ A separate but proximate sleeping environment is recommended such as a separate crib in the parent's bedroom. Bed sharing during sleep is not recommended. Bring your baby to bed to comfort or nurse, but return your baby to the crib for sleep.
- ❖ Consider offering a pacifier at nap time and bedtime: The pacifier should be used when placing infant down for sleep and not be reinserted once the infant falls asleep. It should not be coated with a sweet solution, should be cleaned often and replaced regularly. To establish a breastfeeding routine wait until the baby is one month old to offer the pacifier.
- ❖ Avoid overheating, the infant should be lightly clothed for sleep, and the bedroom temperature should be kept comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
- ❖ No one should sleep with a baby on a couch or arm chair.
- ❖ Do not use home monitors as a strategy to reduce the risk of SIDS. There is no evidence that use of such home monitors decreases the risk of SIDS.
- ❖ Avoid commercial devices marketed to reduce the risk of SIDS. Although various devices have been developed to maintain sleep position or reduce the risk of re-breathing, none have been tested sufficiently to show efficacy or safety.
- ❖ Avoid flat spots on your baby's head. Encourage "tummy time." Avoid having the infant spend excessive time in car-seat carriers and "bouncers." Practice upright cuddle time. Place the infant to sleep with the head to one side for a week and then changing to the other.
- ❖ Make sure all who care for your baby (child care provider, relative, friend, babysitter) know and follow these strategies.

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement, "Changing Concept of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome" released October 10, 2005. The full statement can be found at:

<http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/> Key word – SIDS