

SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome)

Parents and caregivers should now place healthy infants on their backs when putting them down to sleep. This is because recent studies have shown an increased incidence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) in infants who sleep on their stomachs. There is no evidence that sleeping on the back is harmful to healthy infants.

Keep the following points in mind:

1. Infants should be placed for sleep in a nonprone position. Supine (wholly on the back) confers the lowest risk and is preferred. The prone (or tummy) position has a 3 to 9 times greater risk for SIDS than sleeping on the back.
2. Every infant should have its own place to sleep. Infants should not sleep with parents, as an increasing number of infant deaths are caused by a parent inadvertently smothering their infant in their sleep.
3. Do not place your infant to sleep on soft surfaces (waterbeds, sheepskin) or with any pillows.
4. Breast-feed if possible, do not allow passive smoking exposure, and give your infant a pacifier.
5. This recommendation is for sleeping infants. A certain amount of "tummy time" - while the baby is awake and observed, is recommended. Most babies should average 30 minutes per day of "tummy time" - 5-minute intervals 6 times per day is usually sufficient.
6. Be certain that secondary caregivers such as grandparents and early education and childcare centers know about this recommendation.