

American Academy of Pediatrics Expands Guidelines for Infant Sleep Safety and SIDS Risk Reduction

Since the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommended all babies should be placed on their backs to sleep in 1992, deaths from **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome** have declined dramatically. But sleep-related deaths from other causes, including suffocation, entrapment and asphyxia, have increased.

In an updated policy statement and technical report, the AAP is expanding its guidelines on safe sleep for babies, with additional information for parents on creating a safe environment for their babies to sleep.

The policy statement provides global recommendations for education and safety related to SIDS risk reduction. In addition, the AAP is providing recommendations on a safe sleeping environment that can reduce the risk of all sleep-related infant deaths, including SIDS. Three important additions to the recommendations include:

- **Breastfeeding** is recommended and is associated with a reduced risk of SIDS.
- Infants should be **immunized**. Evidence suggests that immunization reduces the risk of SIDS by 50 percent.
- Bumper pads should not be used in **cribs**. There is no evidence that bumper pads prevent injuries, and there is a potential risk of suffocation, strangulation or entrapment.

The report also includes the following recommendations:

- Always place your baby on his or her back for every sleep time.
- Always use a firm sleep surface. Car seats and other sitting devices are not recommended for routine sleep.
- The baby should sleep in the same room as the parents, but not in the same bed (room-sharing without bed-sharing).
- Keep soft objects or loose bedding out of the crib. This includes pillows, blankets, and bumper pads.
- Wedges and positioners should not be used.
- Pregnant woman should receive regular **prenatal care**.
- Don't **smoke** during pregnancy or after birth.
- **Breastfeeding** is recommended.
- Offer a **pacifier** at nap time and bedtime.
- Avoid covering the infant's head or overheating.
- Do not use home monitors or commercial devices marketed to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- Infants should receive all recommended **vaccinations**.
- Supervised, awake tummy time is recommended daily to facilitate development and minimize the occurrence of positional **plagiocephaly** (flat heads).

For more information, visit the American Academy of Pediatrics website at:

<http://www.aap.org/parents.html>