

SIDS

Training

Student Information



SIDS Training

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome

Facts About Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Many more children die of SIDS in a year than all who die of cancer, heart disease, pneumonia, child abuse, AIDS, cystic fibrosis and muscular dystrophy combined.

What is SIDS?

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is a medical term that describes the sudden death of an infant which remains unexplained after all known and possible causes have been carefully ruled out through autopsy, death scene investigation, and review of the medical history. SIDS is responsible for more deaths than any other cause in childhood for babies one month to one year of age, claiming 150,000 victims in the United States in this generation alone - 7,000 babies each year - nearly one baby every hour of every day. It strikes families of all races, ethnic and socioeconomic origins without warning; neither parent nor physician can predict that something is going wrong. In fact, most SIDS victims appear healthy prior to death.

What Causes SIDS?

While there are no adequate medical explanations for SIDS deaths, current theories include:

- Stress in a normal baby, caused by infection or other factors.
- A birth defect.
- Failure to develop.
- A critical period when all babies are especially vulnerable, such as a time of rapid growth.
- Tobacco, cocaine and heroin use by mothers during pregnancy puts the infant at a higher risk for SIDS.
- Infants who sleep on their sides and stomachs have a higher risk of SIDS than babies who sleep on their backs. (Remember to lay the baby BACK to bed)
- Babies born to teenage mothers have a higher risk of SIDS than babies who are born to older mothers.



How and why SIDS occurs?

Many questions but very few answers.

- Scientists are exploring the development and function of the nervous system, the brain, the heart, breathing and sleep patterns, body chemical balances, autopsy findings, and environmental factors.
- SIDS, like many other medical disorders, will eventually have more than one explanation.

Can SIDS Be Prevented? NO!

Some Basic Facts about SIDS:

SIDS is a definite medical entity and is the major cause of death in infants after the first month of life. (1 day to 1 year) SIDS claims the lives of over 7,000 American babies each year. SIDS victims appear to be healthy prior to death. Currently, SIDS cannot be predicted or prevented, even by a physician. There appears to be no suffering; death occurs very rapidly, usually during sleep. Babies should be placed on firm mattresses with nothing in the crib with them. Soft mattresses are associated with a high risk of SIDS. Breast feeding mothers lower the risk of SIDS as the breast milk decreases the occurrence of respiratory infections.

What SIDS is not:

- Caused by external suffocation.
- Caused by vomiting and choking.
- Contagious.
- The cause of pain or suffering in the infant.
- Able to be predicted.
- New.



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What should a firefighter do if they respond to an event where an infant has died?

- Notify police
- Notify coroner
- Control access to the room where the death occurred, back ALL extra personnel out.
- Be sensitive to the needs of the parents but realize that the parents should not hold the deceased infant.
- Document the response including the scene.

Additional Information Sources

- <http://sids.org/>
- <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0002533/>

