

## SIDS Risk Up in Winter

Do you put extra blankets or clothes on your infant during the cold winter months, hoping to keep him or her warmer? The extra layers may actually increase the risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), the sudden, unexplained death of an infant in the first year of life. The number of infants who die from SIDS goes up during the winter, according to NIH's National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).

For more than a decade, NICHD has led the "Back to Sleep" campaign, which explains how to reduce the risk of SIDS. Since the campaign began, the overall SIDS rate in the U.S. has gone down by more than 50%. Despite the campaign's progress, however, SIDS is the leading cause of death in infants between one month and one year of age, claiming the lives of about 2,500 each year.

Most SIDS deaths happen between two and four months of age. While the causes of SIDS are still unclear, you can reduce factors that increase SIDS risk. NICHD endorses these recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics:

- Always place your baby on his or her back to sleep.
- Place your baby on a firm sleep surface, such as a safety-approved crib mattress, covered by a fitted sheet.
- Keep soft objects, toys and loose bedding out of the sleep area.
- Don't allow smoking around your baby.
- Keep your baby's sleep area close to, but separate from, where you and others sleep.
- Consider offering a clean, dry pacifier when placing your baby on his or her back to sleep.
- Don't let your baby overheat during sleep. The temperature should be kept at a level that feels comfortable for an adult.
- Avoid products that claim to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- Reduce the chance that flat spots will develop on your baby's head by providing "Tummy Time" when your baby is awake and someone is watching; changing the direction that your baby lies in the crib; and avoiding too much time in car seats, carriers and bouncers.

NICHD has a variety of free "Back to Sleep" education materials available for parents, caregivers and health care providers.

For more information: [www.nichd.nih.gov/sids](http://www.nichd.nih.gov/sids) or call 1-800-370-2943

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