

**PUT YOUR BABY BACK TO SLEEP**  
**BY: Melissa Jeremiah, RN**  
**Director of Hoosier Uplands Home Health and Hospice**

**Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) rates are at an all time low. Since 1983 the rate of SIDS has fallen by over 50%, to 2,500 SIDS deaths each year in the United States. There are ways you as parents, grandparents, child care providers, or anyone involved in the care of an infant can do to reduce the risk of SIDS:**

- 1. Get medical care in the first 3 months of pregnancy, get regular check ups and get proper nutrition while you are pregnant. These measures help decrease the risk of premature births, which is a major SIDS risk factor.**
- 2. Don't smoke while pregnant, and keep infants out of homes or cars where someone is smoking. The more exposure to tobacco smoke, the greater an infants SIDS risk.**
- 3. Take measures to not become pregnant while you are a teen. SIDS rates are highest for babies born to teen mothers and the more babies a teen has, the greater the risk.**
- 4. Wait at least 1 year between the birth of a child and the next pregnancy. The shorter the time between pregnancies, the higher the SIDS risk.**
- 5. Infants should sleep in a crib with a firm mattress. Do not place covers, pillows, bumper pads or toys in the crib. Soft mattresses and heavy covers are associated with SIDS.**
- 6. Don't bundle infants while they sleep and keep the room at a temperature that is comfortable to you. Overheating an infant may increase their risk for SIDS.**
- 7. Breast fed babies have a lower SIDS rate than formula fed babies.**
- 8. Avoid crowds and exposure to those with respiratory infections. Carefully clean all items the baby comes into contact with. Have people wash their hands before holding or playing with your baby. SIDS often occurs in association with a mild cold or vomiting and diarrhea.**
- 9. If your infant is at high risk for SIDS consider using home monitoring systems (apnea/bradycardia monitors). The risk of SIDS in the following groups is 5 – 10 times that of babies in the general population:  
Infants weighing less than 3.5 pounds.  
Infants whose sibling died of SIDS.  
Infants exposed to cocaine, heroine, or methadone during pregnancy.  
The 2<sup>nd</sup> or succeeding child born to a teen mother.  
Infants who have had an apparent life-threatening event.**
- 10. Place infants to sleep on their backs. Infants do tend to cry more on their backs, and for some placing them on their stomachs seems to calm them and help them to fall asleep. Infants who sleep on their stomachs wake less often and are harder to arouse. Infants who sleep on their stomachs also retain more heat. Even though your infant may not appear to like sleeping on his back, you should not give in and place him/her on their stomach, as infants who sleep on their stomachs have 12.9 times the risk of SIDS compared to those who sleep on their backs.**

**Information for this article was obtained from the American SIDS Institute at [www.sids.org](http://www.sids.org).**