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## **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)**

### **The risks of getting SIDS**

- Boys have a higher risk of SIDS than girls
- The risk of SIDS is higher in babies born to a teenage or younger mother
- The risk of SIDS is higher in premature and low-birthweight infants, including twins and triplets.
- The risk is higher in babies born to mothers who smoked or abused drugs.
- Cold weather months can increase the risk of SIDS
- Deaths due to SIDS occur rapidly and more frequently during sleep, especially between midnight and 9 am

### **Statistics**

- 7,000 babies every year are killed by SIDS...one baby every hour every day
- 90% of babies who die of SIDS are under six months of age

### **What is SIDS and what causes it?**

SIDS or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome is described as the sudden death of a baby, in which the cause cannot be determined even after an autopsy. It can occur without warning and is a major cause of death of infants during the first few months of life. It seems to be associated with a sudden overwhelming respiratory infection. This can lead to abnormalities in breathing and heart rate.

### **Prevention**

IT CANNOT BE PREVENTED. HOWEVER, YOU CAN TAKE STEPS TO REDUCE THE RISKS OF SIDS:

- Placing the baby on its back when sleeping has been shown to be helpful
- Do not smoke or drink when pregnant, or around the baby after birth. This increases the risk of SIDS according to the National Center for Health Statistics.
- Use of firm bedding materials for the baby may be helpful. The following are **not** recommended:
  - sheepskins
  - foam bags
  - beanbag cushions
  - waterbeds
  - foam pads
  - foam sofa cushions
  - foam pads covered with comforters
- Breast feeding your baby can reduce the risk of getting certain illnesses, disorders, and infections.
- Don't keep the baby too warm (i.e. too much clothing, too many blankets, or very warm room). Pediatricians recommend maintaining room temperature between 68-70 degrees Fahrenheit. Signs that a baby may be too hot include:
  - sweating
  - damp hair
  - heat rash
  - rapid breathing
  - restlessness
  - occasionally fever
- REMEMBER: There is no substitute for good prenatal care and if you observe any changes in your baby, contact your doctor IMMEDIATELY!!