Prevent SIDS by lying baby on their back

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SUDDEN Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is a concerning risk for many new parents. Research has found some important ways to reduce the risks of SIDS and to create a safe sleeping environment for babies and young children. Some sleeping arrangements are not safe. They can increase the risk of SIDS or cause serious sleeping accidents. There are three main ways to reduce the risk of SIDS:

1: Put baby on their back to sleep from birth
2: Make sure babys head remains uncovered during sleep
3: Keep your baby’s environment smoke-free – before birth and after

Safe sleeping on their back
The chance of babies dying from SIDS is greater if they sleep on their tummies or sides. The only safe way to put your baby to sleep is on their back, unless your doctor or nurse advises you otherwise.

When your baby is awake it is important to vary their position from lying on their back. Tummy play is safe and good for babies when they are awake and an adult is present.

Babies over six months old can turn over and move around the cot while sleeping. Put them on their back when they first go to sleep but let them find their own comfortable sleeping position. The risk of SIDS in babies over six months old is extremely low.

Keep baby’s face uncovered
Be careful that your babys face and head stay uncovered during sleep as this decreases the risk of SIDS. Loose bedding can cover your babys head, so be sure to tuck your baby in securely so that he or she cannot slip under the bedclothes. Quilts, doonas, pillows, soft toys and cot bumpers should not be placed where your baby sleeps during their first year.

Cigarette smoke harms your baby
Cigarette smoke harms babies before and after birth. The risk of SIDS is increased for babies with parents who smoke during the pregnancy and after the baby is born. Try not to let anyone smoke near your baby.

Other SIDS considerations
Immunisation is NOT associated with SIDS. The peak age of SIDS is the same age babies are most often immunised (two to four months), so by chance they can occur at the same time.

Some babies are born with different shaped heads. A flat pressure spot can develop on a baby’s head if the baby lies in the one position for long periods of time. These flat spots will improve with age and most, but not all, will disappear.

Some babies develop a preference to look in one direction. Sleep baby on their back but encourage them to look in a different direction.