

Overheating Increases SIDS Risk in Winter

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), one of the National Institutes of Health, recently issued a statement to parents and caregivers regarding winter SIDS risk and updated American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommendations. Parents and caregivers should be careful not to put too many layers of sleep clothing or blankets on infants—or to keep room temperatures too warm—because overheating increases the risk of SIDS.

The *Back to Sleep Campaign* emphasizes that unless there's a medical reason not to, place infants on their backs to sleep, on a firm mattress with no blankets or fluffy bedding under or over them. If you use a blanket, place it no higher than the baby's chest and tuck it in under the crib mattress. Keep the baby's crib and sleep area free of pillows and stuffed toys, and keep the temperature at a level that feels comfortable for an adult.

NICHD has led the *Back to Sleep Campaign* for more than a decade. While the campaign has made progress, SIDS remains the leading cause of death in infants between 1 month and 1 year old, with most deaths happening when babies are between two and four months old. NICHD also reports that African American infants are twice as likely to die of SIDS as are white infants, and American Indian babies are nearly three times as likely to die of SIDS as white babies.

The AAP recently issued updated recommendations on reducing the risk of SIDS:

- Always place babies on their backs to sleep, for naps, and at night.
- Place a baby on a firm sleep surface, like a safety-approved crib mattress, covered by a fitted sheet.
- Keep soft objects, toys, and loose bedding out of a baby's sleep area.
- Do not allow smoking around the baby.
- Keep baby's sleep area close to, but separate from, where others sleep.
- Consider offering a clean, dry pacifier when placing babies on their backs to sleep.
- Do not let a baby get overheated during sleep.
- Avoid products that claim to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- Do not use home monitors to reduce the risk of SIDS.

If you have a safety or risk management question or a suggestion for a topic, please contact Markel's Risk Management Department at safety1st@markelcorp.com.