



*When SIDS
Happens,*

*There is
Help*

The loss of a precious baby

to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome

is a tragedy that too many

North Carolina families and

communities have felt. We hope

this pamphlet will help answer

questions about SIDS and assist

you in finding comfort and support

during this time of grief.





SIDS Facts:

Knowing some facts about SIDS can help you understand this puzzling syndrome.

- SIDS can happen to any family.
- SIDS is the leading cause of death for babies between 1 month and 1 year of age.
- SIDS occurs most often between 2 and 4 months of age.
- SIDS claims more boy babies than girl babies.
- SIDS takes place more often in the winter.
- SIDS occurs two times more often among African American babies than white babies.

What is SIDS?

SIDS stands for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, the sudden and unexplained death of a baby under one year of age.

SIDS is determined after an investigation and after other causes of death are ruled out.

SIDS is also called ‘crib death’ because SIDS often occurs when the baby has been sleeping in a crib and does not wake up. It is important to know that cribs do not cause SIDS.

What do we know about SIDS?

The exact causes of SIDS are not known. Researchers are studying babies’ genes, development, and surroundings to learn more about SIDS. To find clues they study the baby’s brain, heart, and lungs.

Not knowing the “how” or the “why” behind SIDS is hard to understand. This can be frustrating for families or caregivers. When SIDS happens, many parents or child care providers feel a deep sense of guilt. They often blame themselves.

Why did this happen?

To try and make sense of this tragedy, it is normal to ask the “why” and “what if” questions over and over again. We want to reassure families that SIDS is not your fault or the caretaker’s fault.

What happens after a baby dies of SIDS?

An autopsy, an investigation of the place where the baby died, and a review of the baby's health history are key steps to learn if the baby died of SIDS.

AUTOPSY:

The purpose of the autopsy is to identify a cause of death. An autopsy is done by a medical professional. The State Medical Examiner's office reviews every autopsy report. Parents, guardians, and the baby's doctor can get a copy of the report upon request.

INVESTIGATION:

First responders or medical emergency workers like the police, fire fighters or paramedics are usually the first to arrive when a baby is not responding.

Police must investigate and gather information about the baby's death. Sometimes the Department of Social Services assists in the investigation.

REVIEW OF THE BABY'S HEALTH HISTORY:

A review of any symptoms or illnesses the baby had is important. The review of the baby's or family's medical history also helps determine why the baby died.

SIDS COUNSELORS:

The county health department has to report every SIDS death. A SIDS Counselor may visit the family to ask questions and to learn about the baby's death. They can provide grief support or counseling to parents, grandparents and siblings.



Where can one turn for help?

SIDS Counselors at county health departments are a resource to families, caregivers, health professionals, and first responders in North Carolina. They have received special training about SIDS and grief. In addition to a doctor or pastor, SIDS Counselors can help families cope with their sorrow and loss.

When SIDS happens, the SIDS Counselor will try to contact the parents or guardians. SIDS Counselors' services are free and may include:

- ◆ Providing support
- ◆ Answering questions
- ◆ Listening and offering a helping hand
- ◆ Collecting information about the baby's health history and death
- ◆ Following-up with the medical examiner's office
- ◆ Helping read the autopsy report
- ◆ Linking family members or caregivers with others who provide grief support



Other parents who have lost a baby to SIDS can be a source of support. SIDS Counselors can connect parents with others who can help.



North Carolina SIDS Program

Information about a SIDS death goes to the North Carolina SIDS Program. We use this information to help understand why SIDS happens and to discover how to keep SIDS from happening to other families.

SIDS Resources and Sources of Grief Support

Contact a SIDS Counselor at your county health department listed below:

Name:

Address:

City:

Telephone:

Email:

Hours:

NORTH CAROLINA SIDS PROGRAM

919-715-8430
Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
(closed holidays)

This statewide program provides information about SIDS and supports the work of the SIDS Counselors. The NC SIDS Program is a service of the Division of Public Health - Women's and Children's Health Section.

NATIONAL SIDS ALLIANCE

800-221-7437 or
www.sidsalliance.org
A national organization with state affiliates.

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

www.aap.org
A partner in the national effort to reduce SIDS risks.

N.C. BACK TO SLEEP CAMPAIGN FOR SIDS RISK REDUCTION

919-828-1819 or
www.NCHealthyStart.org
Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 4:00 PM
(closed holidays)
A statewide public education and awareness campaign about SIDS and ways to reduce SIDS risks.

NC FAMILY HEALTH RESOURCE LINE 1-800-367-2229 OR 1-800-FOR-BABY

(toll-free)
Monday - Friday
9:00 AM - 7:00 PM
(closed holidays)
A statewide, bilingual (English and Spanish) telephone resource for general information about SIDS, ways to reduce the risk of SIDS, and other parenting topics.

