



# Delaware health aware

Summer 2007

## You can help lower your baby's risk of SIDS

Follow these sleep habits to help keep your baby safe:

- Always place your baby on his or her back to sleep—for naps and at night.
- Your baby should always sleep alone in a safe crib or bassinet. A safe crib or bassinet has a firm mattress and sheets that fit snugly around it. Soft surfaces may increase your baby's risk of SIDS.
- Do not put your baby to sleep in an adult bed, on a couch, in a chair or on a waterbed.
- Keep soft objects, toys and loose bedding out of your baby's sleep area. The only bedding that should be used is a tight, well-fitting sheet.
- Do not let anyone smoke around your baby. Exposure to secondhand smoke can increase your baby's risk of SIDS.
- Dress your baby in light pajamas. Getting too hot can increase your baby's risk of SIDS.

- Avoid products that claim to reduce the risk of SIDS. Most of these products have not been tested to see if they are safe or if they work.



## Help babies sleep safely

SIDS stands for sudden infant death syndrome. It describes the sudden, unexplained death of a baby younger than 1 year old.

### Fast facts about SIDS

- Of all infant deaths between 2001 and 2003, 7.9 percent were caused by SIDS.
- SIDS is the leading cause of death in infants between 1 month and 1 year old.
- Most SIDS deaths happen when babies are between 2 months and 4 months old.
- African American babies are more than twice as likely to die from SIDS.
- SIDS is more common in baby boys.
- SIDS is more common in the winter months.

Research shows that babies are

less likely to die of SIDS when they sleep on their backs.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that healthy babies be placed on their backs to sleep.

### Dangers of sleeping in adult beds

The safest place for your baby to sleep is in a crib. Adult beds and mattresses are not made for infants. Babies have died when they became trapped between the mattress and headboard.

Babies have also died from accidental suffocation when they went to sleep next to another person in bed and their noses and mouths became blocked, keeping them from breathing.

Source: [www.nichd.nih.gov/SIDS](http://www.nichd.nih.gov/SIDS)



## Here's to a healthy pregnancy

Your baby's birth may be many months away, but now is the time to take care of yourself and your baby.

Here are some things you can do.

**See a doctor soon.** It's important to get regular care while you're pregnant.

At these visits the doctor will check on you and your baby. You'll also get lots of good advice. If there are problems, they may be found and treated soon.

Be sure to keep all of your appointments.

**Stay active.** Exercise such as walking is usually OK, but check with your doctor.

Find the provider for you at [www.DelawarePhysiciansCare.com](http://www.DelawarePhysiciansCare.com).

**Eat well.** A good diet helps give your baby nutrition to grow. Eat a variety of fruits, veggies, grains, lean meat or beans, and low-fat or nonfat dairy products.

Taking a prenatal vitamin with folic acid can help prevent some birth defects.

Your doctor can tell you how

much weight you should gain. But don't diet while you are pregnant.

**Help protect your baby.**

Don't drink alcohol or smoke.

Also, talk to your doctor:

- Before you take any vitamins or medicine, even aspirin.

- About foods and other things to avoid, such as meat that isn't cooked long enough and too much mercury from fish.

**Take care.** Get plenty of rest. And feel good about yourself, because you're doing your best for your baby and you.

Source: National Women's Health Information Center

### Back in shape after your baby

After your baby is born, it takes time for your body to get back into shape. Exercise can help.

For example, it can help you:

- Lose weight gained during pregnancy.
- Have more energy and less stress—things every parent needs.

You need time to recover, so ask your doctor when you can start exercising. When you're ready, take it slow. Walking is a great choice, and you can push your baby in a stroller.

Talk to your doctor about exercises to help make your stomach muscles and other muscles stronger. You might start with a type of exercise that is like an easy sit-up. Again, take it easy at first. This is especially

key if you had a cesarean.

Your doctor can help you plan exercises that are safe and good for you. You may need to wait several weeks until you can do a lot. But you can ease back into fitness. And that's good for your body and your mood.



Sources: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; American Council on Exercise

## How to lower blood pressure

What goes up must come down.

At least, if your doctor says your blood pressure is up, it really should come down.

High blood pressure can put you at risk for problems such as heart attack, stroke and heart failure.

But you can reduce those risks by taking these steps to get your blood pressure back in a healthy range.

**Lose weight if needed.** Being at a healthy weight means your heart doesn't have to work so hard. Talk to your doctor for help losing weight.

Also:

- Drink water when you get hungry between meals. Or eat a piece of fruit.
- Eat high-calorie or high-fat foods less often.
- Plan healthy meals ahead of time.
- Be more active.

**Take your medicine.**

Sometimes you'll need a little extra help getting blood pressure



under control. Take all medicine your doctor tells you to. And take it just as prescribed.

**Get plenty of exercise.** Aim for 30 to 60 minutes of activity most days of the week. But talk to your doctor before starting an exercise program, especially if you haven't been active for a while.

**Eat well.** Include plenty of

### Keep your cholesterol in check

If you have diabetes, you may have a problem with cholesterol, a type of fat in your blood.

Diabetes raises your risk of heart attack and stroke. If your cholesterol is high, you have a bigger risk.

There are two types of cholesterol—good and bad. Not enough of the good kind or too much of the bad kind can block your blood vessels.

Doctors check cholesterol levels with blood tests. If you have diabetes, you should have your cholesterol checked at least once a year.

To keep your cholesterol at a healthy level:

- Eat a healthy diet.
- Keep active every day.
- Don't smoke.

Your doctor also may have you take medicine to help.



Source: American Diabetes Association

fruits and vegetables in your diet, as well as low-fat or fat-free dairy products.

Also limit salt (sodium) as much as possible. Try cooking with herbs and spices to add flavor, instead of reaching for the saltshaker.

Source: American Heart Association



**SCHALLER ANDERSON**  
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**Community Relations Advocate** Paula Victoria  
**Chief Medical Officer** Stanley Lynch, M.D.  
**Member Services Manager** Bianca Pagan

**Member Services** 1-866-543-2167  
**Behavioral Health** 1-866-543-2383

[www.DelawarePhysiciansCare.com](http://www.DelawarePhysiciansCare.com)

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