

SIDS and Kids Hunter Region – Glossary of Terms

An incorporated organisation, which provides bereavement support and counselling to families who have experienced the death of a child, regardless of cause. Examples of causes of deaths include; Stillbirth, Neonatal deaths, SIDS, Sleeping Accidents, Fast onset illness, Drowning or other accidents.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

“The sudden and unexpected death of an infant under 1 year of age, with onset of the lethal episode apparently occurring during sleep, that remains unexplained after a thorough investigation including performance of a complete autopsy, and review of the circumstances of death and the clinical history.” (Krous et al 2004)

Stillbirth

In Australia a stillborn baby is generally defined as one who shows no sign of life at birth and is of at least 20 weeks gestation or, if gestation age is unknown, 400gms birth weight. Definitions may vary from state to state

Miscarriage

A miscarriage occurs when the baby dies, and the pregnancy ends prior to the twentieth week of gestation

Neonatal Death

The first twenty eight days of a baby’s life is known as the neonatal period. When a baby who is born alive dies during this time, medical staff use the term neonatal death

Fast Onset Illness

Sometimes babies or children die suddenly and unexpectedly which appear to be for no reason BUT when an autopsy/postmortem is performed, a cause of death is found. Sometimes this cause of death is due to an illness which may have occurred with little or no symptoms: examples of these may be meningococcal disease or pneumonia.

Post Mortem / Autopsy

This is a surgical procedure, which seeks to determine the cause of the baby’s death. During a postmortem, incisions are made to enable the examination of the baby’s internal organs. In most cases, following the procedure the incision is stitched.