

Publication: Port Lincoln Times  
Edition: 22 June 2010

# Sleeping habits increase SIDS risk

STUDIES show there is evidence that sharing a sleep surface with a baby increases the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and fatal sleep accidents.

An average of 46 per cent of infants who died suddenly and unexpectedly in Australia in 2007 died while co-sleeping.

Babies who are most at risk of SIDS or sleeping accidents while sharing a sleep surface, are babies who are less than four months of age, and babies who are born pre-term or small for gestational age.

Most studies show that SIDS deaths attributable to sharing a sleep surface are predominantly amongst

babies whose parents smoke.

There is a very high risk of infant death and sleeping accidents when a baby shares a sofa or couch with an adult during sleep.

A large-scale published study showed in 2007 that 8.5 per cent of Australian parents bed-share with their babies.

A recent unpublished study of new mothers, commissioned in conjunction with Tresillian Family Care Centres, which surveyed 1000 mothers of children aged up to two years old, showed 41 per cent allowed their baby to sleep in their bed with them.

It is of concern if co-sleeping is on the

increase within Australia.

SIDS and Kids Australia chief executive Leanne Raven said SIDS and Kids communicates safe sleeping messages in order to help reduce the number of sudden and unexpected deaths.

However, the research shows that we need to be more diligent in our messaging in order to ensure that parents are aware of the risks and equipped to make educated decisions about safe sleeping habits.

This staggering statistic can be altered by following SIDS and Kids' safe sleeping recommendations:

- Sleep baby on the back, not on the tummy

or side

- Sleep baby with face uncovered

- Avoid exposing babies to tobacco smoke

- Provide a safe cot, mattress and bedding

- Sleep baby in their own safe sleeping environment next to the parent's bed for the first 6 to 12 months.

Red Nose Day is this Friday June 25.

Funds raised contribute to vital research and education in the areas of stillbirth, SIDS and safe sleeping.

Product can also be purchased and donations made online at [www.rednoseday.com.au](http://www.rednoseday.com.au) or by calling 1300 1 RED NOSE (1300 1 733 6673).



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