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THE PUBLIC PULSE “Your Health Department Working For You”

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Date: June 23, 2017
For Release: Immediately

Baby’s Safe Sleep

The Davidson County Health department is currently working on the Back to Sleep campaign, otherwise known as the Baby’s Safe Sleep campaign. The Baby’s Safe Sleep campaign provides parents of children under the age of one year with information aimed at reducing infant deaths from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related deaths. SIDS is the sudden death of a baby under the age of one year. SIDS is the leading cause of death among babies between one month and one year of age. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2015 there were about 1,600 deaths due to SIDS and about 900 deaths due to accidental smothering in bed.

There are many different methods to lower the risk of a child dying from SIDS and other sleep related deaths. These include:

When preparing for a new baby:

- Have a crib or bassinet with a firm mattress and fitted sheet.
- Keep all pillows, comforters, sheepskins, bumper pads and stuffed toys out of the crib.
 - These items can suffocate or strangle the baby

- Do not buy or use products that claim to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- Make sure the baby's room does not get too hot.
 - A room that is very warm can increase the risk of SIDS
- Keep your car and home smoke-free at all times.
 - Secondhand smoke and smoking during pregnancy are risk factors for SIDS

When the baby comes home:

- Your baby should sleep on their back until they are one year old.
 - If your baby becomes strong enough to roll onto their stomach on their own when sleeping, then they can be left that way.
- Your baby should sleep alone in a crib, portable crib or bassinet.
 - Each child should sleep in its own crib or bassinet to avoid suffocation or smothering. Twins, triplets, or others should each have its own crib.
- Your baby should never sleep on a bed, couch or other sleeping area with anyone, including parents.
 - Instead, parents can put the baby's crib or bassinet within arm's reach so you can be close to your baby.
- Parents should never put their baby on a soft surface such as couch, bed, chair, air mattress, waterbed, comforter, pillow, sheepskin, etc.
- Dress your baby in no more than one layer than you would wear.
 - If your baby is sweating or their chest feels hot to the touch, then your baby may be too hot.
- Breastfeed
 - Studies have shown that breastfeeding your baby can reduce the risk of SIDS

- Take your baby to all of their scheduled doctor visits and get all recommended immunizations.

A common question that new parents have about placing their baby on their back while sleeping is “will my baby choke if he/she spits up”? A baby is no more likely to choke when on its back compared to being on its stomach. When a baby spits up, it will swallow the spit-up or it will dribble out of the mouth. When a baby is lying on its back, the “food pipe” is below the “air pipe”, so gravity helps keep the spit-up out of the air pipe and lungs.

For more information regarding SIDS data and resources available, you can visit <https://www.cdc.gov/features/sidsawarenessmonth/>. For more information about health department services, community data, or health status data, contact the Public Information Officer at the Davidson County Health Department at (336) 242-2354.