

The Back to Sleep Program and How It Affects a Baby's Development

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1. What is SIDS?

Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden, death of an infant under the age of one year, which remains unexplained after many investigations.

SIDS is...

- the major cause of deaths in infants from one month to one year
- the death of a healthy baby
- an infant death that leaves unanswered question and great grief on the parents and family
- a death most often associated with sleep and with no signs of suffering
- determined after an autopsy, an examination of the death scene, and a review of the infant and family's clinical histories with nothing found

SIDS is not...

- preventable, but there are ways of reducing the risk
- suffocation, choking, vomiting, or colds
- the cause of every infants unexpected death
- contagious

Some extra stuff about it is...

- SIDS tends to occur quickly and when sleeping
- the risk is highest for 2-4 month old babies
- about 4,500 babies die each year in the United States due to SIDS
- the deaths caused by SIDS have nothing to do with the nationality or ethnic or economic backgrounds.

2. What is the Back to Sleep program (BTSP)?

The Back to Sleep program is a public education program designed to increase awareness about and decrease incidence of SIDS. The program mainly encourages is putting your baby to sleep on his/her back.

3. What is tummy time?

Tummy time is a baby's time playing on his stomach during supervised awake hours.

4. What are motor skills?

Motor skills are motions carried out when the brain, nervous system, and muscles work together.

There are two main different motor skills, fine and gross motor. Fine motor skills are small movements — such as grabbing something with your thumb and forefinger — that use the small muscles of the fingers, toes, wrists, lips, and tongue.

Gross motor skills are the bigger movements — such as running and jumping — that use the large muscles in the arms, legs, torso, and feet.

5. What is Torticollis?

Torticollis is a twisted neck, referring to the head being tipped to one side, while the chin is turned to the other. It is when one side of the neck is longer than the other.

6. What is Positional plagiocephaly?

Positional plagiocephaly, also known as *flattened head*, occurs when a child's head develops a flat area on one side or on the back of the head. The hair may be thinner on the flattened area, the ears may appear to be lopsided, and the forehead may bulge a little.

Two types of positional plagiocephaly:

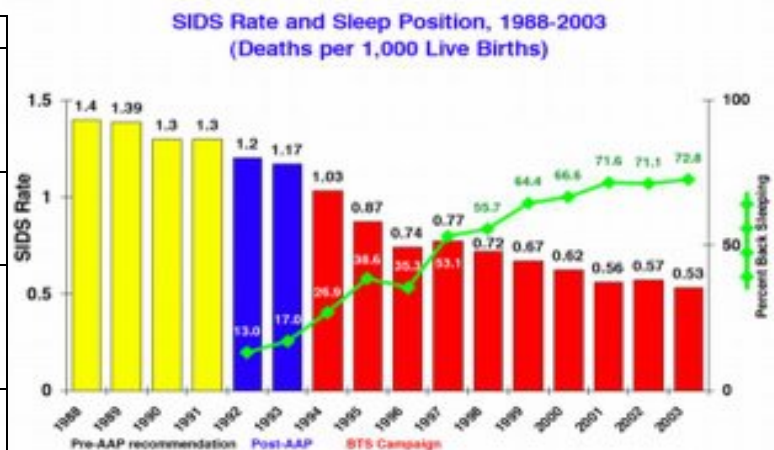
Positional brachycephaly, in which the back of the head is flat and the head is wide and short

Positional scaphocephaly, in which the head is narrow and long

The most common cause of positional plagiocephaly is the baby's position while sleeping or resting. Swings, cribs, strollers, bouncers and [playpens](#) can all play a roll in positional plagiocephaly, and if a baby spends a great deal of time in any one of these without a change in position, the skull can become flattened.

A rise in positional plagiocephaly is an unfortunate side effect of the *Back to Sleep campaign*. Since it encourages parents to place their babies on their backs to sleep in the hope of reducing [SIDS](#), it is causing cases of this to occur. While the campaign has been hugely successful, a study that took place from 1992 to 1994 showed that cases involving positional plagiocephaly increased six times, resulting in 33 cases out of every 10,000 infants. Since SIDS is a much greater concern than positional plagiocephaly, doctors continue to recommend back sleeping.

PROS	CONS
The BTSP has helped save the lives of many infants	The BTSP has caused many developmental problems in babies
It has helped make parents aware of SIDS	There has been an increase in positional plagiocephaly.
It has given tips on how to help REDUCE the risk of SIDS	Developmental milestones may have to be changed
	Children are not spending enough time on their bellies
	Exploration of environment is delayed; walking, crawling, sitting, creeping and rolling
	Torticollis is more prevalent
	Gross and Fine motor skills are becoming delayed



The BTSP has done much more good than bad, but the thing is that people don't know about some of the issues that it is causing babies to have.

My main goal is not to put down the BTSP, but to get parents to understand the risks of not putting a baby on his tummy. Putting a baby on his back to sleep is important. But it is also vital for proper development that a baby has supervised tummy time during awake hours.

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