



Information Statement

IMMUNISATION

SIDS AND KIDS RECOMMENDS IMMUNISATION FOR BABIES FOR MANY HEALTH BENEFITS INCLUDING A LOWER RISK OF SIDS

To Reduce the Risks of SIDS and Fatal Sleep Accidents

1. Sleep baby on the back from birth, not on the tummy or side
2. Sleep baby with face uncovered (no doonas, pillows, lambs wool, bumpers or soft toys)
3. Avoid exposing babies to tobacco smoke before birth and after
4. Provide a safe sleeping environment (safe cot, safe mattress, safe bedding)
5. Sleep baby in its own safe sleeping environment next to the parent's bed for the first six to twelve months of life

Immunisation is a simple, safe and effective way of protecting people against some diseases. The risks of these diseases are far greater than the risks of immunisation. The vast majority of babies in Australia have childhood immunisations.

Are immunisations linked to SIDS?

Over the past 30 years, there have been concerns that SIDS is caused by immunisation, specifically with diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTP) vaccine.¹ This concern was first raised in 1979 when a report from the United States reported that four babies died within 24 hours of being immunized.² After this, a number of studies were undertaken in North America, Europe, and Australasia to establish whether there was a link between SIDS and immunisation. None of these studies has confirmed that immunisation is linked to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). In fact, several studies demonstrated the reverse, with SIDS being less common in babies who had been immunized.¹

More recent research has also suggested that there was no increased risk of SIDS in the 14 days following immunisation or that the recently introduced vaccines (eg Hib) were associated with an increased risk of SIDS.³ A study published in 2007 from the German SIDS research group shows clearly that immunisation reduces, rather than increases, the risk of SIDS significantly.⁴

Should my baby have the usual immunisations?

SIDS and Kids recommends that all babies should receive the normal program of immunisations at the scheduled ages, both in infancy and beyond.

The SIDS and Kids Safe Sleeping program is based on scientific evidence and was developed by Australian SIDS researchers, paediatricians, pathologists, and child health experts with input from overseas experts in the field.

For further information:

- visit the SIDS and Kids website at www.sidsandkids.org or phone us on
- 1300308307The *Immunise Australia Program* website will provide you with more information to help you to make informed decisions:
www.immunise.health.gov.au/
- Your doctor or child health nurse will also be able to provide you with more information.

References

1. Byard R, Krous H. Sudden infant death syndrome: overview and update. *Pediatr Dev Pathol* 2003;6(2):112-27
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. DTP vaccination and sudden infant deaths—Tennessee. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 1979;28:131–132.
3. Vennemann M, Butterfass-Bahloul T, Jorch G, Brinkmann B, Findeisen M, Sauerland C, et al. Sudden infant death syndrome: No increased risk after immunisation. *Vaccine* 2007;25:336-40.
4. Vennemann M, Höffgen M, Bajanowski T, Hense H, Mitchell E. Do immunisations reduce the risk for SIDS? A meta-analysis. *Vaccine* 2007;25(26):4875-9.

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