



Jackson County Department of Public Health

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Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness

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October marks the beginning of pregnancy and infant loss awareness month. This includes miscarriages, stillbirths, and SUIDS.

SUIDS may be a new term for many, it stands for sudden unexplained infant death syndrome, this can include: SIDS, accidental suffocation or strangulation in bed, or an unexplained cause.

In North Carolina, according to the Safe Sleep NC organization, "SIDS and other sleep-related infant deaths are the leading cause of infant mortality in babies 1-12 months of age and the 3rd leading cause of death among all North Carolina infants."

In order to combat these unfortunate deaths, more education is needed on safe sleep environments. Things you can do to reduce your chance of SUIDS:

1. Always place the baby on his or her back for all sleep, naps and at night.
2. Always place the baby on a flat, firm surface meant for sleep.
3. Room share, but not bed share, for at least the first six months of the babies life, but ideally for one year (meaning baby sleeps in the same room in their own sleep space, bed sharing is not recommended).
4. Only bring baby to your bed for comfort or feeding.
5. Never place the baby on a sofa, armchair, or recliner for sleep.
6. Do not place anything in the babies asleep space; ABSOLUTELY NO soft objects, crib bumpers, loose bedding, blankets, toys, stuffed animals, anything that could increase the risk of entrapment, suffocation, or strangulation.
7. Do not let the baby get too hot, keep the room at a comfortable temperature and do not overdress the baby.
8. Swaddling is OK (always placed on their back) until the baby is able to roll over on their own then baby should have a wearable blanket or a sleep sack to sleep in if needed. The swaddle should never be too tight and should allow the baby to move their legs and be able to breathe easily.
9. Offer a pacifier at naptime and at bedtime, if breast-feeding it is recommended to wait until breast-feeding as well established before offering a pacifier.



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Not to be forgotten, October also marks the beginning of pregnancy loss awareness. Miscarriage is defined a pregnancy loss before 20 weeks, after 20 weeks it is considered a stillbirth. According to the March of Dimes, anywhere from 10 to 15 out of 100 women have a miscarriage before they even know they're pregnant, the statistics for total miscarriage rate are unknown due to this fact. Most miscarriages happen in the first trimester, or up until 14 weeks of pregnancy. Miscarriages can happen for any number of reasons or for no clear reason at all, but some common causes for miscarriage can be: infection, chromosomal abnormalities, or problems with the uterus or cervix. Symptoms of a miscarriage can include vaginal bleeding, cramping, and severe abdominal pain, or you can have no symptoms at all. It is important, if you think you may be having a miscarriage, to seek immediate medical attention.

Stillbirth happens in about 1 out of every 160 births in the United States according to March of Dimes. Most stillbirths happen without any obvious cause and generally happen before a woman goes into labor. Some things can increase your risk of having a stillbirth such as: having a previous pregnancy that resulted in a stillbirth, a previous pregnancy with complications like preterm birth, being a smoker, using recreational drugs, or having other conditions that affect pregnancy like diabetes or high blood pressure. Some of these causes are out of your control and some things can be in your control, it is very important to seek early prenatal care and keep your prenatal appointments and listen to your doctor's recommendation. If you are pregnant and suddenly notice a change in your baby's movement or a decrease or no movement seek medical attention immediately.

October 15th marks World Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day, participate in the International Wave of Light by lighting a candle at 7 pm local time to honor all babies gone too soon. Keep your candle lit for at least one hour to create a continuous "wave of light" across all time zones covering the entire globe!

For more information on safe sleep, please visit SafeSleepNC.org.

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