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Frederick County Health Department

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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FREDERICK COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT ROLLS OUT SAFE TO SLEEP CAMPAIGN

FREDERICK, MD – The Frederick County Health Department in collaboration with Frederick County’s Child Fatality Review Board is launching a campaign to raise awareness about Sudden Unexpected Deaths in Infancy. Ads on local Transit buses will feature a baby sleeping beside the mother’s bed with the message “Safe Sleep: Baby Shares Your Room, Not Your Bed.” Additional messaging will be circulated on social media using #SafeToSleep. The goal is to increase safe sleep practices and to decrease the number of sleep related infant deaths.

Every year the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports about 3500 sudden and unexpected infant deaths occur. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) continues to be the leading cause of death among babies between 1 month and 1 year of age. SIDS cases are infant deaths without a clear cause of death. SIDS is one type of Sudden Unexpected Deaths in Infancy (SUDI) and accounts for about half of the SUDI cases.

Frederick County averages about 1 sleep related infant death a year, and over the past 5 years all of those cases involved sleeping with a father, mother, or other caregiver. Other sleep related deaths that are classified as SUDI include: suffocation which usually involves bedding or other soft materials; entrapment between two objects, such as caregiver and a recliner or a mattress and a wall; and strangulation where something is wrapped around the baby’s neck blocking the airway.

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The Safe to Sleep Campaign is a nationally recognized campaign from the [Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development](#) (NIH). They have been advocating for safe sleep since 1994. As a result, SIDS deaths have decreased more than 50% since that time.

A child is at risk for death while sleeping with another adult, child, or pet. The crib, bassinet, portable crib or play yard should follow the safety standards of the [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) (CPSC).

Things caregivers can do to reduce the risk of infant deaths in a sleep environment:

- Always place baby on his or her back to sleep for all naps and at night
- Baby has his or her individual safe sleep space
- Use a firm sleep surface, covered by a fitted sheet, in the baby's sleep area
- Baby does not sleep in an adult bed or on a couch, bean bag, air mattress or chair alone or with anyone else.
- No further padding, including bumpers, blankets, pillows, soft objects or toys should be in the crib
- No use of tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, or use of illegal drugs during pregnancy or after the baby is born
- Breastfeed your baby since breastfeeding has many health benefits for mother and baby
- Give your baby a dry pacifier that is not attached to a string for naps and at night
- Do not let your baby get too hot. Dress your baby in light sleep clothing
- Avoid products that claim to decrease the risk of SIDS such as wedges or positioners
- Give your baby plenty of Tummy Time while he or she is awake and someone is watching. This helps your baby's head, neck, and shoulder muscles get stronger and prevents flat spots on the head.

For more information about the campaign or safe sleep for babies, visit <http://health.frederickcountymd.gov/safesleep> or contact Jan Sparks at 301-600-1757 or jsparks@FrederickCountyMD.gov.

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