



SAFE SLEEP & INFANT MORTALITY IN INDIAN COUNTRY

August 29, 2016 - Part 2 of a 3-Part Series

Infant mortality rates have been found to vary greatly based on race and ethnicity.¹ In some areas of the U.S., infant mortality rates for AI/AN babies are up to four times higher than non-Hispanic whites.²

Recent national research has found that 14% of all U.S. infant mortality can be attributed to sleep-related causes.³ These deaths are considered Sudden Unexpected Infant Deaths (SUIDs) and include deaths due to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and accidental strangulation or suffocation.⁴

Common SUIDs Risk Factors:⁵

- Exposure to cigarette smoke
- Loose bedding or pillows in the infant sleep area
- Bed-sharing

As a partner within the National Action Partnership to Promote Safe Sleep (NAPPSS), the Urban Indian Health Institute is sharing NAPPSS' Action Plan strategies for health care providers and infant caregivers to address the preventable causes of SUIDs. We are also sharing the related strategies of the Healthy Native Babies Project; designed in 2006 to provide local support and resources to promote infant mortality risk-reduction messages within Indian Country.⁵

NAPPSS and Healthy Native Babies Strategies for Engaging and Communicating with Infant Caregivers:

- Utilize community leaders such as AI/AN elders' knowledge and wisdom in developing and promoting strength-based approaches to safe infant sleep and resilience among families adversely affected by health inequities.^{3,5}
 - [Healthy Native Babies Workbook & Toolkit](#)
- Honor AI/AN traditions by engaging cultural and community leaders to create culturally appropriate approaches to providing safe sleep surfaces such as hosting a class on making cradleboards.^{3,5}
- Develop mechanisms to provide infant caregivers easy access to resources and services to address the common barriers to implementing and sustaining infant safe sleep behaviors.³
 - [Coming of the Blessing](#) created by the AI/AN Women's Committee of the March of Dimes West Region
 - [Native Generations](#)

References

1. CDC. (n.d.). Understanding Racial and Ethnic Disparities in U.S. Infant Mortality Rates. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db74.htm>.
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4. CDC. (n.d.). About SUID and SIDS. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/sids/aboutsuidandsids.htm>.
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