

## Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) - statistics

The number of babies dying of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) has reduced dramatically in Victoria. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) compiles statistics on SIDS in Victoria. It has found that the incidence of SIDS has fallen by as much as 84 per cent since 1990.

The **SIDS and Kids Safe Sleeping** campaign has been given the credit for changing key childcare practices.

### A SIDS snapshot

Average statistics from 1990–2000 include:

- In 1990, 104 Victorian babies died of SIDS: a rate of 1.56 per 1,000 live births.
- In 2000, 26 Victorian babies died of SIDS: a rate of 0.44 per 1,000 live births.

### Close-up on 2005

In 2005:

- 18 Victorian babies died from SIDS: a rate of 0.35 per 1,000 live births.

### Reducing the risk of SIDS – campaigns

- In July 1990, the Reducing the Risk of SIDS (RTR) community education program began. It has reduced the SIDS rate in Victoria by over 80 per cent.
- The SIDS and Kids Safe Sleeping campaign is an evidence-based campaign aimed at reducing the rates of SIDS deaths in Australia. It was developed following the Forum to Review the Risk Factors for SIDS, convened in March 1997 by the National SIDS Council of Australia (SIDS and Kids). This forum was attended by researchers, scientists, SIDS experts and pathologists from across Australia and internationally.
- In 1999, SIDS and Kids Victoria, along with all Australian SIDS organisations, formally expanded their wide range of services to include support for families whose children die suddenly and unexpectedly – from 20 weeks gestation through to two years of age – regardless of cause.
- In March 2002, to reflect these expanded services, the organisation also embraced a new name – SIDS and Kids.

### Changes in childcare practices

The SIDS and Kids Safe Sleeping program recommends:

- Put baby on their back to sleep, from birth.
- Sleep baby with face uncovered.
- Avoid exposing infants to tobacco smoke before birth and after.
- Make sure your baby has a safe cot, safe mattress, safe bedding and safe sleeping place, night and day.
- Sleep baby in its own safe sleeping environment next to the parent's bed for the first six to twelve months of life.

## Where to get help

- Your doctor
- SIDS and Kids Victoria Tel. (03) 9822 9611 or 1300 308 307
- Your midwife
- Maternal and child health nurse

## Things to remember

- The incidence of SIDS in Victoria has decreased by over 80 per cent since 1990.
- This decrease is due to increased awareness of the risk factors as a result of the SIDS and Kids Safe Sleeping program.

**This page has been produced in consultation with, and approved by:**

SIDS and Kids Victoria

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