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October is infant safe sleep month

Stanton~ October has been declared Infant Safe Sleep Month in Michigan to help curb the growing number of deaths caused by babies being put to sleep in unsafe environments.

When it comes to the death of an otherwise healthy, sleeping baby, the statistics are too startling to ignore. In 2006, fifty-two Michigan babies, or one child every week died of accidental suffocation or strangulation while sleeping. An additional fifty-one infant deaths were classified as SIDS in 2006.

- Four out of five deaths due to suffocation occurred in an adult bed, waterbed, couch or recliner.
- For nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of deaths due to suffocation, the baby was found sleeping with another adult or child.
- Soft/heavy bedding was found to be a factor in fifty percent of the sleep related deaths.

Locally, twenty infants from Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties lost their lives to SIDS from 1995-2004. In an effort to reduce that number families and caregivers are urged to follow these guidelines set by the American Academy of Pediatrics:

- Infants should be placed on their backs to sleep.
- Use a firm sleep surface, firm mattress covered only with a fitted sheet.
- Keep soft objects and loose bedding out of the crib (no pillows, quilts, comforters, stuffed toys or other soft objects).
- Do not smoke when you are pregnant, do not smoke or let others smoke around your baby.
- Do not share a bed with your baby. A safe crib in the parent's room, next to the adult bed is recommended.
- Avoid overheating the baby.
- Encourage "tummy time" when the baby is awake.
- Make sure everyone caring for the baby is aware of these guidelines.

For more information please visit www.michigan.gov/safesleep.

Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.

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