

The Baby Pillow, Is It Safe For Baby

If you check the baby section of any large department store or browse through craft fairs, you will likely see many varieties of baby pillows: some soft, some lacey, those with hand embroidered detail, etc. These lovely creations are tempting for new parents or someone shopping for a unique baby gift to purchase. Before doing so, the safety of a baby pillow should be considered. If you receive a baby pillow as a gift or purchase one for your child, there are some chilling facts you must know before you place the pillow in the crib with your baby.

SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) is the leading cause of death in the United States for infants one month to one year of age. In the early 90s, based on reports out of Europe and Australia, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) released a recommendation that babies not be placed on their tummies for sleep. In 1994, the Back To Sleep campaign was initiated as a joint effort by several national agencies and consumer groups. Following this, various studies and surveys were conducted to evaluate the relevance of this change on the occurrence of SIDS. These studies showed the rate of SIDS decreased by 50%, but other related factors were also discovered. A task force formed by the AAP issued a new statement in 2005 to include recommendations on all the new findings. Primarily, the non prone position was changed to a recommendation of a back only position. Included in the recommendations was a clearly defined list of items to place in the crib: a firm mattress, a fitted sheet, and the baby. If a bumper pad is used it must not be a loose, fluffy type. There should be no baby pillow, stuffed toys, etc. in the crib with the infant. In response to increased incidence of flat head syndrome, alternate methods of prevention were advised. Positioning other than on the back or use of a baby pillow were not deemed worth the risk of SIDS by the AAP.

There is a baby pillow on the market, called Baby Sleep Positioner, which includes the recommendations for SIDS prevention in its advertising. Made of foam, the purpose of this baby pillow is to support the head while keeping the baby positioned on the back. The statement released by the AAP is clear that it does not endorse any specific commercial products. If parents are considering the use of the foam baby pillow sleep positioner, checking with their Pediatrician first is probably the safest approach.

About the Author

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