

# Message Bears Repeating: Back Sleep Best for Babies

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Babies who sleep on their backs are less likely to die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), yet a quarter of all babies, especially those of African-American descent, are not placed on their backs to sleep. In a new study, researchers at Yale School of Medicine have found that mothers who believe their babies are uncomfortable or more likely to choke when sleeping on their backs are more likely to place them in other positions, increasing the risk of SIDS.

Published in the April issue of *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, a JAMA/Archives journal, the study also found that mothers who receive consistent advice from physicians, nurses and the media to place their [babies](#) to sleep on their backs are likely to follow this recommendation.

Isabelle Von Kohorn, M.D., clinical fellow in the Department of Pediatrics at Yale, and colleagues performed face-to-face interviews between 2006 and 2008 with 2,299 mothers, most of whom were African-American mothers of infants younger than eight months. The mothers discussed what advice they had received and their personal beliefs about infant sleep position.

“Among mothers at high risk for not placing their infants on their backs, addressing concerns about infant comfort and choking, and increasing the amount of advice mothers receive about putting babies on their backs, should help increase the number of babies being placed on their backs to sleep,” said Van Kohorn.

About 63 percent of mothers believed that their infants were most comfortable in a position other than their backs and 56 percent believed their infants were more likely to choke on their backs.

“Increasing advice for exclusively back sleep, especially through the media, and addressing mothers’ concerns about infant comfort and choking are critical to getting more [infants](#) on their back to sleep,” said Von Kohorn.

The study was funded by the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, which also supports the national Back to [Sleep](#) Campaign [www.nichd.nih.gov/sids](http://www.nichd.nih.gov/sids) .

Provided by Yale University

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