

News Releases

DHEC News Release: DHEC stresses sleep safety to reduce infant deaths

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oct. 30, 2013

DHEC stresses sleep safety to reduce infant deaths

COLUMBIA, S.C. - The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control is reminding parents to follow recommended safe sleep practices for infants, the agency announced today.

"The infant mortality rate in South Carolina saw a slight increase from 7.4 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2011 to 7.6 deaths in 2012, due in part to a substantial increase in sleep-related accidents," said Dr. Lisa Waddell, deputy director of Preventive Health Services at DHEC. "Most of these accidents can be prevented with safe sleep practices."

New data released today by DHEC (pdf)

[/sites/default/files/docs/agency/docs/10302013_leadingcausesofinfantdeaths2012.pdf](http://www.dhec.sc.gov/sites/default/files/docs/agency/docs/10302013_leadingcausesofinfantdeaths2012.pdf) shows the number of infant deaths caused by *accidents* increased by 36.7%, from 30 deaths in 2011 to 41 in 2012. Suffocation and strangulation in bed accounted for nearly all of these accidents, rising from 21 deaths in 2011 to 39 in 2012.

Dr. Waddell said one of the best ways to prevent sleep related deaths is by following the *A,B,C's of Safe Sleep - leave your baby Alone on their Back in their Crib*. She also recommends never smoking around your baby, as second-hand smoke can contribute to sudden, unexplained infant death.

Click [here](http://www.cdc.gov/sids/parents-caregivers.htm) for more information on recommended infant safe sleep practices.

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