



NEWS RELEASE Mobile County Health Department

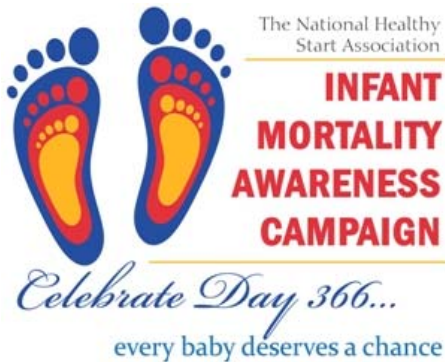
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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September is Infant Mortality Awareness Month

While most babies in Mobile County do celebrate their first birthday, many do not. September is Infant Mortality Awareness Month and serves as a time to remember the little lives that have been lost and look ahead to a future with fewer infant deaths. One key to realizing such a future is spreading the “safe sleep” message.

In 2009, nearly 30 percent of infant deaths in Mobile County were sleep-related. These deaths included suffocation, roll-over deaths (caused when a parent or another child rolls on top of an infant), sudden unexplained death in infancy (SUDI), and improper sleep position. In agreement with the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Alabama Baby Coalition, which is a project of the Mobile County Health Department, recommends that all infants less than 12 months of age be placed on their backs every time they are put to sleep, whether for napping or at night. It is important that parents tell their babysitters and caregivers to place infants on their backs to sleep. This is because infants placed on their stomachs who are accustomed to sleeping on their backs are at greater risk of dying.

It is also important that infants sleep in a safe crib or cradle. A safe crib or cradle is one that is free from pillows, blankets, stuffed animals, and other items that could cover the infant’s face or lead to overheating. It is also important that there be no co-sleeping, which is commonly known as bed sharing. Bed sharing is when an infant shares a bed with an adult, another child or an animal. This can create a dangerous and potentially deadly situation. A good alternative to bed sharing is to place the infant's crib or cradle near the parent’s or caregiver’s bed to allow for more convenient contact.

Other risk factors for infant death include cigarette smoke, shaking a baby, and improper car seat use.

The Alabama Baby Coalition works with all local hospitals, medical and social services providers, and communities in an effort to make Mobile a safer place to be a baby. If you would like more information about the Alabama Baby Coalition or would like to join, call 694-5007 or visit www.alabamababycoalition.org.

