

Study: There Might Be a Link Between Swaddling a Baby and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome

By Paige Towers • May 9, 2016 at 2:03pm

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Swaddling — the act of wrapping a baby in cloth so their movements are restricted — is a centuriesold practice of parents with newborns. In fact, many consider it to be a skill so useful (and so difficult to master considering your subject may be screaming and/or flailing their arms and legs) that it's often referred to it as an “art.” The snug wrapping can soothe a cranky baby by providing warmth and security, as well as prevent babies from being by their own (otherwise known as the startle reflex.)

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Moro reflex

Yet, a new study from the

American Academy of Pediatrics

that shows that swaddling a baby may increase the risk for sudden infant death syndrome, or SIDS — especially when that baby is placed in a front or side sleeping position.

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In the effort to determine whether swaddling is associated with an increased risk for SIDS, the authors of the study reviewed four observational studies — making for a total of 760 SIDS cases and 1,759 control subjects. After reviewing all four studies, researchers noted a strong correlation between swaddled babies and SIDS cases. Altogether, swaddling increased the risk for SIDS by nearly onethird.

The study also revealed that the risk for SIDS from swaddling also increased with age. Swaddled babies tended to be younger than nonswaddled babies in all four studies, but babies who were swaddled at age six months or older had an increased risk for SIDS, most likely due to the wrap constricting ability to roll over.

The authors are quick to point out no sweeping conclusions should be reached, as research is still limited on the subject of SIDS and swaddling. What's more, the data reviewed was also collected from different geographical areas, including areas of England, Australia and the U.S., where swaddling practices vary. Moreover, other factors associated with SIDS, such as whether the babies were cosleeping

or not, weren't accounted for in the study.

Despite the limitations, the researchers still recommend that parents consult current guidelines regarding appropriate age limits when practicing the art of swaddling, as well as heed

11/10/2016 Swaddling Your Baby May Increase The Risk of SIDS | Van Winkle's current advice to place babies on their backs while sleeping — particularly when wrapping up a baby before sleep.

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