

NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Shea Briggs, Smart Start Nurse for Halifax County Health Department (left) and Sarah Harris, RN Halifax Regional Birthing Center Right lay Jeremy Robertson down for a nap in the Birthing Center Nursery.

Halifax Regional Gives Safe Sleep Onesies to All Babies Born in Hospital During SIDS Awareness Month

DATE (Raleigh, NC) – (December 7, 2008) -Halifax Regional Medical Center and the Halifax County Health Department, with the help of the North Carolina Healthy Start Foundation, have partnered to give onesies (baby garments) to every baby born in Halifax Regional Medical Center in October for National Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Awareness Month. Each onesie has an attractive, but clear, safe sleep message “Stomach to Play, Back to Sleep, For Baby’s Safe Sleep.”

There are many causes of infant death across North Carolina. From 2003-2007, 60 babies died in Halifax County (rate of 16.8 per 1,000 live births) according to the NC Center for Health Statistics. SIDS is one of the leading causes of infant death. In 2007 alone, 98 babies in North Carolina died of SIDS. In addition to SIDS deaths, many babies die from accidental suffocation or strangulation. Many of these preventable deaths are related to excess bedding and parents sleeping with their babies, according to the North Carolina Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.

Safe sleep tips for new parents include:

- Put your baby on the back to sleep for naps and at night
- Use a firm mattress for baby’s crib
- Keep pillows, comforters, soft blankets, stuffed animals and toys out of the crib
- Baby should sleep in his or her own crib

- Do not let anyone smoke near your baby
- Breastfeed your baby
- Keep baby and room temperature comfortable (68°-75°F)- not too hot

Shea Briggs, Smart Start RN for the Halifax County Health Department and Amy Joseph, Birthing Center Manager for Halifax Regional Medical Center, arranged for the North Carolina Healthy Start Foundation to provide training on Tuesday, Oct. 28 for the Birthing Center staff and all interested participants to reinforce safe sleep practices. Marta Pirzadeh, Infant Safe Sleep campaign coordinator, conducted the training.

“Safe Sleep education, even before a baby is born, is crucial,” says Pirzadeh. “We are thrilled that new parents will leave Halifax Regional Medical Center with information to help their babies sleep safely once they get home.” Karen Daniels, VP of Nursing at Halifax Regional Medical Center stated “Cooperation with the Halifax County Health Department for the protection of our young ones is vital to our community. I am so happy for this opportunity.”

For more information about baby safe sleep visit www.NCHealthyStart.org or call 919.828.1819.