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Infant death investigated: Experts urge "Safe Sleep" for infants

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CHEEKTOWAGA, N.Y. (WKBW) - Cheektowaga Police tell 7 Eyewitness News that the investigation continues into what appears to be the accidental death of a 7-month-old baby girl who was sleeping in bed with her mother. The death occurred Sunday on East End Avenue in Cheektowaga.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates there are around 3,500 sleep-related deaths among U.S. babies each year. While cases of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) are decreasing, other forms of infant death are increasing with babies suffocating while sleeping on an adult bed, chair or air mattress, and sleeping with another person such as an adult or child.

Sleep related deaths are the leading cause of death in infants 1 month to 1 year old.

The issue continues to be such a concern that Niagara County Social Services and the Child Advocacy Center of Niagara just announced a new program to educate the public on infant safe sleep practices.

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The program is called "Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep" and encourages everyone, including babysitters and grandparents, to know the rules of safe sleep.

Those include:

- Infants should be placed on firm mattresses
- Infants should not have stuffed animals, pillows or toys where they sleep.
- Babies need to be placed on their back
- Babies under age 1 should not sleep with another person, such as an adult or other child.
- It is recommended that mothers, especially nursing mothers, place the infant's crib next to their own bed so the mother can touch the child.

More information about safe sleep and a program to help parents who can't afford a crib can be found here: <http://cacofniagara.org/education-prevention/safe-sleep/>

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