

Harmful and Misleading Information Being Spread about Infant Sleep

Newborn care experts are concerned about erroneous fear-laden anti-swaddling advice being given to parents. They say absence of this vital, clinically proven tool could be harmful or even deadly to both babies and parents.

Raleigh, NC ([PRWEB](#)) August 31, 2010 -- Newborn care expert Pamela Diamond is one of many professionals calling arms-free swaddling and anti-swaddling advice misleading and irresponsible at best, and potentially harmful or even deadly at worst. The messages are patently false, lacking evidence, data and clinical studies while going directly against decades of [clinical research](#)*

“To advise parents to use an arms-free swaddle or no swaddle at all based on unsubstantiated fears is downright absurd,” says Raleigh, North Carolina-based Diamond, a certified postpartum doula and baby sleep consultant. “Without this vital tool that is clinically proven to comfort a crying, screaming newborn and keep an infant safely asleep on its back, parents could possibly be setting up a trigger for illness or even deadly consequences.”

Apparently pediatrician Dr. Harvey Karp concurs. An eminent expert on the subject of newborn sleep and whose work spans nearly four decades, Dr. Karp has long advocated swaddling as part of the Five S's. On his website [The Happiest Baby on the Block](#), Karp writes that [swaddling](#) is essential to public health because infant crying and the exhaustion it causes in parents are main triggers for postpartum depression, SIDS, child abuse such as Shaken Baby Syndrome, breastfeeding failure, maternal smoking, marital stress, car accidents, and over-diagnosis and treatment of babies for illness, among others.

Though some published reports claim otherwise, the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) has advocated swaddling many times and has also written about the benefits of swaddling on numerous occasions.

Nowhere is the anti-swaddling trend more directly evident than in North Carolina. As part of the implementation of the Infant Safe Sleep Campaign the NC Healthy Start Foundation says the long held tradition of swaddling could lead to suffocation due to loose bedding. While loose bedding is no doubt a serious problem, it is altogether a separate issue from swaddling safety.

“Considering the millions of people that have been swaddling newborns every night and every day, if such a theory were correct, there would be literally thousands of such reported incidents over the years, and there simply aren't,” says Michael Gatten, CEO and Founder of Miracle Industries, LLC, makers of a leading swaddling product, [Miracle Blanket](#). “We are extremely concerned about parents being incorrectly educated regarding sleep positions that have not been clinically studied.”

As an example of the misinformation, the term “swaddling” is being exploited and illegitimately applied to various non-swaddling items to validate the use of clinical studies to promote sales. While most of these products do serve the purpose of eliminating loose bedding, they lack the very discernible scientifically-proven attributes that make swaddling safe and effective.

Arms-free swaddling or no swaddle at all, it's pretty much the same. In both cases, experts say the efficacy and the benefits are gone. Therefore it's crucial to separate the MYTHS from the FACTS.



MYTH: A wearable blanket or other zip-up sack is just as good as a swaddling blanket to help babies sleep.
FACT: [Medical research](#) showing the incredible efficacy of PROPER swaddling has been done using a snugly-wrapped blanket with arms comfortably immobilized; usually at the sides. Wearable blankets are not snug to apply pressure and do not keep the arms snugly inside.

MYTH: Babies need their hands free to self-soothe, develop motor skills, and to flail their arms if they are in distress.

FACT: Babies are not coordinated enough to practice motor skills and/or self-soothe (ie. suck hands) reliably until 14 weeks. Swaddling is a substitute during this time to limit startle reflex, thus preventing unwanted arousal and facial scratches.

MYTH: Wearable blankets and other zip-up sacks help babies sleep better.

FACT: Only PROPER swaddling has been shown in clinical studies to calm a fussy, colicky baby while helping baby sleep safer, better, deeper and longer on their backs, while also eliminating loose bedding.

MYTH: Wearable blankets and other zip-up sacks contribute to a decrease in the risk of SIDS.

FACT: Only PROPER swaddling has been shown in clinical studies* to reduce SIDS by as much as 30% even over back-sleeping babies without swaddling.

MYTH: Tight swaddling can interfere with lung expansion, contributing to the risk of suffocation.

FACT: Research on PROPER swaddling has shown that a tight swaddle does not inhibit oxygen absorption or respiration. And, no incident of suffocation due to overly tight swaddling has ever been reported.

*Ponsonby, A, et al, Factors potentiating the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome associated with the Prone Position. NEJM 1993; 329:377-82)

<http://content.nejm.org/cgi/content/full/329/6/377>

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