

# information statement

## immunisation

**red  
nose**  
saving little lives

**Red Nose recommends immunisation for babies.  
There are many health benefits including a lower risk of SUDI.**

### **to Reduce the Risk of Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI), including Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and Fatal Sleep Accidents**

1. Sleep **baby on the back** from birth, not on the tummy or side
2. Sleep baby with **head and face uncovered**
3. Keep baby **smoke free** before birth and after
4. Provide a **safe sleeping environment** night and day
5. Sleep baby in their **own safe sleeping place** in the **same room as an adult care-giver** for the first six to twelve months
6. **Breastfeed** baby

**The term Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) is now used as this term refers to all cases of sudden and unexpected death in infancy and includes deaths from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and fatal sleeping accidents. Safe sleeping recommendations target known risk factors associated with SUDI. Where studies specifically define the population as SIDS, this specific term will be used to describe the study findings.**

Immunisation is a simple, safe and effective way of protecting against a number of infective diseases<sup>1</sup>. The risks of these are far greater than the risks of immunisation. The vast majority of babies in Australia have childhood immunisations as do most other countries where immunisation is easily available. In some countries all babies are immunised unless there is a contraindication.

### **are immunisations linked to SUDI?**

No study has demonstrated an increased risk of SUDI with immunisation. Similarly, no study has shown an increase in autism with immunisation<sup>2-4</sup>. In fact, several case control studies have confirmed the reverse, with SUDI less common in the immunised group compared with those not immunised<sup>5-7</sup>. Some studies have even confirmed the SUDI rate in the immunised group is nearly half that in the non-immunised group<sup>8,9</sup>. In South Korea, which has universal immunisation, recent data showed few SUDI or sudden deaths reported in the first 2 years of life<sup>10</sup>.



Studies looking specifically at the diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTP) vaccine which was suggested as having an association with SUDI 30 years ago have shown that DTP immunisation has no effect on babies' arousal from sleep<sup>11</sup> and that increased DPT immunisation coverage is associated with significantly decreased SUDI mortality<sup>6,7</sup>.

Recent research has shown no increased risk of SUDI in the 14 days following immunisation or that recently introduced vaccines (e.g. Hib against Haemophilus) are associated with an increased risk of SUDI<sup>9</sup>. The German SUDI research group showed clearly that immunisation reduces, rather than increases, the risk of SUDI significantly<sup>12</sup>.

## **should my baby have the usual immunisations?**

Red Nose recommends that all babies should receive the normal program of immunisations at the scheduled ages, both in infancy and beyond.

In Australia, between 1990 and 2015 approximately 5,000 babies died suddenly and unexpectedly. Baby deaths attributed to SUDI have fallen by 80% and it is estimated that 9,500 infant lives have been saved as a result of the infant safe sleeping campaigns.

The Safe Sleeping program is based on strong scientific evidence, has been developed in consultation with major health authorities, SUDI researchers and paediatric experts in Australia and overseas, and meets the National Health & Medical Research Council rules for strong evidence.

For further information visit the Red Nose website at [rednose.com.au](http://rednose.com.au) or phone Red Nose on 1300 998 698.

The Immunise Australia Program website will provide you with more information to help you to make informed decisions: [www.immunise.health.gov.au](http://www.immunise.health.gov.au)

Your doctor or child health nurse will also be able to provide you with more information.



## references

1. Zaman K, Roy E, Arifeen SE, et al. Effectiveness of maternal influenza immunization in mothers and infants. *The New England Journal of Medicine* 2008;359:1555-64.
2. Shermer M, Hall H, Pierrehumbert R, Offit P, Shostak S. 5 Things We Know to Be True. *Sci Am* 2016;315:46-53.
3. Taylor LE, Swerdfeger AL, Eslick GD. Vaccines are not associated with autism: an evidence-based meta-analysis of case-control and cohort studies. *Vaccine* 2014;32:3623-9.
4. DeStefano F, Price CS, Weintraub ES. Increasing exposure to antibody-stimulating proteins and polysaccharides in vaccines is not associated with risk of autism. *The Journal of Pediatrics* 2013;163:561-7.
5. Byard RW, Krous HF. Sudden infant death syndrome: overview and update. *Pediatr Dev Pathol* 2003;6:112-27.
6. Müller-Nordhorn J, Hettler-Chen C-M, Keil T, Muckelbauer R. Association between sudden infant death syndrome and diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis immunisation: an ecological study. *BMC pediatrics* 2015;15:1.
7. Srinivas K, Preeti G, Pasula S. DPT immunization and SIDS. *International Journal of Contemporary Pediatrics* 2017;2:202-7.
8. Hunt CE, Hauck FR. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. In: R. Kliegman, B. Stanton, J. W. St. Geme, N. F. Schor, Behrman RE, eds. *Nelson Textbook of Pediatrics* (20th ed, pp 1998-2006e1). Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2016.
9. Vennemann MMT, Butterfass-Bahloul T, Jorch G, et al. Sudden infant death syndrome: no increased risk after immunisation. *Vaccine* 2007;25:336-40.
10. Choe YJ, Kim J-H, Son HJ, Bae G-R, Lee D-h. Sudden death in the first 2 years of life following immunization in the Republic of Korea. *Pediatrics International: Official Journal of the Japan Pediatric Society* 2012;54:905-10.
11. Loy CS, Horne RS, Read PA, Cranage SM, Chau B, Adamson TM. Immunization has no effect on arousal from sleep in the newborn infant. *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health* 1998;34:349-54.
12. Vennemann MMT, Höffgen M, Bajanowski T, Hense HW, Mitchell EA. Do immunisations reduce the risk for SIDS? A meta-analysis. *Vaccine* 2007;25:4875-9.

.....





# red nose

saving little lives

Suggested citation:  
Red Nose National Scientific Advisory Group [NSAG], 2017.  
Information Statement: Immunisation. Melbourne, Red Nose.  
This information statement was first posted in June, 2008.  
Most recently updated April, 2017.

**1300 998 698** | [rednose.com.au](http://rednose.com.au)  
[education@rednose.com.au](mailto:education@rednose.com.au)



© Red Nose Limited 2017

Except as permitted by the copyright law applicable to you, you may not reproduce, copy or communicate any of the content from this document, without the express and written permission of the copyright owner, Red Nose Limited.