

Socioeconomic	Increased occurrence in lower socioeconomic class
Birth	Higher incidence in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preterm infants, especially infants of extremely and very low birth weight • Multiple births[†] • Neonates with low Apgar scores • Infants with central nervous system disturbances and respiratory disorders such as bronchopulmonary dysplasia • Increasing birth order (subsequent siblings as opposed to firstborn child)
Health status	Infants with a recent history of illness; lower incidence in immunized infants
Sleep habits	Highest risk associated with prone position; use of soft bedding; overheating (thermal stress); co-sleeping with adult, especially on sofa or non-infant bed; higher incidence in co-sleeping with adult smoker Infants co-sleeping with adult at higher risk if younger than 11 weeks old
Feeding habits	Lower incidence in breastfed infants
Pacifier	Lower incidence in infants put to sleep with pacifier
Siblings	May have greater incidence in siblings of SIDS victims
Maternal	Young age; cigarette smoking, especially during pregnancy; poor prenatal care; substance abuse (heroin, methadone, cocaine). A few studies have shown an increased risk in infants exposed to second-hand environmental tobacco smoke.

*Heron M: Deaths: leading causes for 2008, *Natl Vital Stat Rep* 60(6):1-94, 2012.

†Although a rare event, simultaneous death of twins from SIDS can occur.

Data from American Academy of Pediatrics, Task Force on Infant Sleep Position and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome: Changing concepts of sudden infant death syndrome: implications for infant sleeping environment and sleep position, *Pediatrics* 105(3):650-656, 2000; American Academy of Pediatrics, Task Force on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome: SIDS and other sleep-related infant deaths: expansion of recommendations for a safe infant sleeping environment, *Pediatrics* 128(5):1030-1038, 2011.

There has been much debate over the term *SIDS*, yet the definition noted earlier remains for the time being. Other terms have been developed to explain sudden deaths in infants. **Sudden unexpected early neonatal death (SUEND)** and **sudden unexpected infant death (SUID)** share similar features but differ in regards to the timing of death: whereas SUID is considered a death in the postneonatal period, SUEND occurs in the first week of life. The [American Academy of Pediatrics, Task Force on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome \(2011\)](#) policy statement considers SIDS to be a component of SUID.

Etiology

There are numerous theories regarding the etiology of SIDS; however, the cause remains unknown. One hypothesis is that SIDS is related to a brainstem abnormality in the neurologic regulation of cardiorespiratory control. This maldevelopment affects arousal and