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Health Commissioner

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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October 2, 2024

Health Department Promotes Safe Sleep Practices for Healthier Babies During Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month

In recognition of Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month, the Toledo-Lucas County Health Department is emphasizing the serious need for safe sleep practices to protect infants and reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and Sudden Unexplained Infant Death (SUID).

Each year, thousands of infants in the United States tragically lose their lives in unsafe sleep environments. In Lucas County alone, between 2018 and 2024, 64 infant deaths (20% of all infant fatalities in the county) were categorized as Sudden Unexplained Infant Deaths (SUIDs). Of these, 26 were confirmed to be sleep-related.

"Every baby deserves a safe sleeping environment, and it's our mission to make sure parents and caregivers are equipped with the knowledge they need," said Health Commissioner, Karim Baroudi. "We encourage the ABCs of safe sleep: Babies should sleep **Alone**, on their **Back**, and in a **Crib** to minimize the risk of accidental suffocation."

The Toledo-Lucas County Health Department is dedicated to spreading awareness, education, and support through multiple initiatives:

- **Cribs for Kids Program:** providing free, online safe sleep education for expecting families and families with children under the age of one. Families receive education, a free pack-n-play, and a 30-day post-assessment to ensure the family is practicing safe sleep for baby.
- **Informational Posters:** the health department is working with the Lucas County Coroner's Office to place posters in OB/GYN, pediatrician, and other medical offices to educate providers, as well as expecting and new mothers.
- **Clear the Crib Challenge:** the Safe Sleep Education program will share fun but educational videos on social media throughout the month of October to engage the public in the ABCs of Safe Sleep.
- **Events:** During Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month, TLCHD will host and participate in several educational events and outreach efforts to ensure parents and caregivers are informed and empowered to create safe sleep environments for babies:

[more]



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Infant Safe Sleep Baby Shower

Date: Thursday, October 3
Time: 4 to 7 p.m.
Location: Toledo Main Hospital Auditorium
About: Food, games, raffles prizes, and safety information for expecting and new parents or caregivers.

Humana Community Baby Shower

Date: Saturday, October 19
Time: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Location: YWCA East Office 1301 Starr Ave. Toledo, OH 43605
About: Connecting families with resources, trustworthy information, other local families, and community support, and of course, to have FUN! Mothers, fathers, foster parents, partners, and expecting parents are invited.

By increasing awareness, supporting families, and promoting Safe Infant Sleep, the Toledo-Lucas County Health Department aims to contribute to reducing infant mortality due to SUID/SIDS. For additional information on safe infant sleep education and materials, please call 419-213-4128.

Key Recommendations for Safe Infant Sleep:

- Always place babies on their backs to sleep, for naps and at night.
- Use a firm, flat sleep surface, such as a mattress in a safety-approved crib.
- Keep soft bedding such as blankets, pillows, bumper pads, and toys out of the baby's sleep area.
- Share a room with your baby, but not the same sleeping surface. Babies should not sleep in the same bed as parents or siblings.
- Avoid overheating. Dress babies in sleep clothing, such as wearable blankets, and keep the room at a comfortable temperature.
- Do not smoke or expose babies to secondhand smoke.

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