



"Your Local
Health Department"

Branch - Hillsdale - St. Joseph Community Health Agency

570 N. Marshall Road
Coldwater, MI 49036
(517) 279-9561
Fax (517) 278-2923

20 Care Drive
Hillsdale, MI 49242
(517) 437-7395
Fax (517) 437-0166

1110 Hill Street
Three Rivers, MI 49093
(269) 273-2161
Fax (269) 273-2452

www.bhsj.org

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Contact: Rebecca Burns, Health Officer
517-279-9561 ext. 0148#

Yvonne Atwood, Director of Personal Health & Disease Prevention
517-279-9561 ext. 0143#

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Safe Sleep Awareness Month

Coldwater, MI – September is Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month and to recognize this important observance, the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency is reminding parents and caregivers of techniques that can help to substantially reduce the risk of infant death. “The arrival of a new baby means big changes for the whole family, especially when it comes to making sure the home and car are safe for the baby,” says Rebecca Burns, Health Officer for the tri-county health department, “knowing the ABC’s of safe sleep is vital. Infants need to be **Alone**, on their **Back**, in a **Crib**.”

According to the Safe Kids Coalition, two out of three babies who die from injury in their first year of life die from suffocation, which prevents them from breathing. Many of these deaths happen when babies sleep in an unsafe way. “Although we have made great strides in reducing the number of preventable infant deaths, more work remains,” says Yvonne Atwood, Director of Personal Health and Disease Prevention. “The loss of any baby to unsafe sleep environments is such a tragedy, particularly since such deaths are 100% preventable.” All babies should always be placed to sleep on their backs, never on their sides or tummies, in their own crib. Other lifesaving steps parents and caregivers can take to protect their baby include:

- Never put the baby to sleep with adults or other children as the practice greatly increases the chance of a tragedy occurring.
- Use a firm mattress with a tightly-fitted sheet.

- Be sure that the crib does not contain extra items -- including pillows, crib bumpers and stuffed animals.
- Use a safe sleep sack instead of blankets.
- Do not overheat baby.
- Make certain that no one smokes around baby.

By creating safe sleep environments, parents, grandparents, and caregivers can reduce the risk of SIDS and other sleep-related causes of infant death. To learn more about safe sleep visit: www.michigan.gov/safesleep. To receive more healthful tips for raising a healthy family, visit us online at www.bhsj.org or like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/bhsjwic.

Branch County

570 N. Marshall Rd.
Coldwater, MI 49036
(517) 279-9561

Hillsdale County

20 Care Drive
Hillsdale, MI 49242
(517) 437-7395

Three Rivers

1110 Hill St.
Three Rivers, MI 49093
(269) 273-2161

Sturgis

1555 E. Chicago Rd.
Ste. C
Sturgis, MI 49091
(269) 273-2161
Thursday & Friday Only

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