

FACTS AND FIGURES: MA Center for Unexpected Infant and Child Death

Most SUIDs are listed as one of three types:

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

#1



The sudden death of an infant less than 1 year of age that cannot be explained after a thorough investigation is conducted, including a complete autopsy, examination of the death scene, and a review of the clinical history.

Unknown Cause

#2



The sudden death of an infant less than 1 year old that remains undetermined because one or more parts of the investigation was not completed.

Accidental Suffocation & Strangulation in Bed

#3



The sudden death of an infant less than 1 year of age that can happen because of:

- Suffocation by soft bedding—for example, when a pillow or waterbed covers an infant's nose and mouth
- Overlay—when another person rolls on top of or against the infant while sleeping
- Wedging or entrapment—when an infant is wedged between two objects such as a mattress and wall, bed frame, or furniture
- Strangulation—for example, when an infant's head and neck become caught between crib railings (for older cribs built prior to the regulation where slats were placed closer together so that infant heads cannot fit through)

Even after a thorough investigation, it can be hard to tell SIDS apart from other sleep-related infant deaths such as overlay or suffocation by soft bedding. This is because these deaths are often unwitnessed and there are no tests to tell SIDS apart from suffocation. To complicate matters, people who investigate SUIDs may report cause of death in different ways and may not include enough information about the circumstances of the event from the death scene.

Produced by: The Massachusetts Center for Unexpected Infant and Child Death

We support families, communities, and professionals after an unexpected death during pregnancy, infancy, or early childhood. Please visit <http://www.magriefcenter.org>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). <https://www.cdc.gov>

