

SUID vs. SUDI

Sudden Unexplained Infant Death (**SUID**) and Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (**SUDI**) are, for purposes related to Act 73 of 2010, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Education and Prevention Program Act, used interchangeably, and defined as:

The sudden and unexpected death of an infant due to natural or unnatural causes.

Causes of SUID and SUDI can include:

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) – SIDS is one of several causes of SUID/SUDI. However, SIDS, unlike the other SUID/SUDI causes, is a diagnosis of exclusion. The SIDS diagnosis is only given after all other possible causes of sudden, unexplained death have been ruled out through a careful case investigation, which includes a thorough examination of the death scene, a complete autopsy, and a review of the infants medical history.

Asphyxia or Suffocation – This may be caused by choking, constriction of the chest or abdomen, strangulation, narrowing of airway passages (severe allergic reaction or reactive airway disorders) or the inhalation of toxic gases. Common objects associated with suffocation are plastic bags, soft pillows and soft materials such as bedding or stuffed animals. The most commonly reported cause of suffocation in infants is accidental suffocation and strangulation in bed.

Other causes of infant suffocation include:

- Overlaying or accidental suffocation on a shared sleep surface – Typically this is caused when a parent (caregiver, sibling etc.) accidentally suffocates the infant by turning over on the infant while sleeping, obstructing the infants ability to breath.
- Accidental strangulation from unsafe surroundings – Caused by a restricted airway or windpipe often by strings, ties, cords from toys, clothing or household appliances.
- Wedging or Entrapment – This occurs when the face or thorax is compressed typically because of entrapment between two objects such as a mattress and bed frame.
- Immersion in water or Drowning – Prevents breathing due to water or other fluids in the lungs.
- Choking – Caused when food, toys, or other small objects become stuck in a child’s airway.
- Rebreathing – Partial or complete inhalation of previously exhaled gases thought to occur when infants are placed in the prone position.
- Neck Compression – Compression of the neck can be caused by any object or result from unusual positioning such as a car seat with poor neck support.

Metabolic Error – Inborn errors of metabolism that prevent the body from turning food into energy.

Injury or Trauma – Intentional or unintentional injuries (head injury, bruising or abrasions, choking, etc.) which may be fatal or nonfatal.