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The Baby Bedtime Battle Between Parents and Grandparents

Both Generations Agree SIDS is a Top Concern – But Disagree on How to Keep Babies Safe While They Sleep

MINNEAPOLIS (September 13, 2010) – Parents and grandparents rarely disagree about how cute their (grand)children are, but when it comes to setting up safe sleep environments for babies, the two generations don't always see eye to eye, according to a new study conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs on behalf of HALO Innovations in time for National Baby Safety Month. The survey found that grandparents are more likely than parents to place babies on their sides or stomachs to sleep, and more likely to place unnecessary and potentially dangerous objects in babies' cribs, increasing their risk for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and accidental suffocation. The majority of both parents and grandparents agree that SIDS is their top concern in raising their children. However, considering a 2005 U.S. Census Bureau report indicating that 30 percent of children younger than 5 are being cared for by grandparents, the need to educate the older generation on current safe-sleep practices, such as placing babies on their backs to sleep and using wearable blankets, has never been more important.

“Forty percent of the parents with a child age 2 or younger we surveyed expressed concern that their parents or in-laws may not always follow their instructions about how to safely put their baby down to sleep – and a quarter have had a disagreement about safe-sleep practices,” says Bill Schmid, the founder of HALO Innovations. “It's imperative that parents take the time to educate grandparents, as well as other caregivers, on the best ways to prepare a baby for sleep without increasing their risk for SIDS or accidental suffocation. And it's equally important that grandparents listen and be open to doing things differently from when they were new parents.”

SIDS and accidental suffocation are the leading causes of death for babies younger than 1 year old, claiming the lives of nearly 5,000 babies every year. To reduce the risk of SIDS, the American Academy of Pediatrics suggests that parents, grandparents and other caregivers replace loose blankets with a wearable blanket, such as the HALO® SleepSack® wearable blanket, which is now available nationwide at Target, Babies 'R Us stores and other retailers.

Caregivers should also always place babies on their backs to sleep; remove all pillows, loose blankets, stuffed animals and bumper pads from the crib; and refrain from smoking around babies or bringing babies into their own beds.

“I know that keeping babies safe is parents’ No. 1 priority, and the best way to help babies sleep safely is by placing their babies on their backs in a bare crib, wearing a wearable blanket like the HALO SleepSack,” says Dr. Tanya Remer Altmann, a pediatrician, author and member of HALO’s medical advisory board.

HALO’s survey of more than 1,000 parents and grandparents also revealed the following:

- Fifty-eight percent of grandparents agreed that “babies are babies; what worked years ago when my children were babies is still fine today.” Conversely, 60 percent of parents disagreed with the sentiment that what worked years ago when they were babies is still fine today.
- Parents are more likely to say that it’s best to place a baby on his or her back to sleep than grandparents (77 percent vs. 59 percent). Grandparents are more likely than parents to think a baby is safest sleeping on his or her side (21 percent vs. 12 percent) or stomach (16 percent vs. 8 percent).
- More than four in 10 parents and grandparents say that pacifiers, which SIDS experts recommend that babies use while sleeping, are safe to leave in a baby’s crib. However, similar proportions of both generations also agree that bumper pads, which medical experts deem to be a hazard, are safe.
- Grandparents are also more likely to believe it is safe to have loose blankets (49 percent vs. 31 percent of parents) and a baby monitor (23 percent vs. 12 percent) in the crib with the baby.
- Eighty-two percent of parents say they swaddle their baby for sleep compared to less than half of grandparents who swaddle their grandchildren (46 percent).

For tips on how to prepare your child or grandchild for a safer sleep and reduce the risk of SIDS and accidental suffocation, as well as advice from HALO medical experts on other infant-health concerns, visit www.halosleep.com.

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About HALO Innovations

HALO Innovations is a leading proponent of safe sleep for babies. Based in Minneapolis, HALO has a singular mission: to help babies sleep safely. Founded in 1994 by William Schmid, who began researching sleeping environments after he lost an infant daughter to SIDS three years earlier, HALO is dedicated to developing products that set new standards for the safety and improved health of sleeping infants and bringing peace of mind to one's home.

HALO products are used in more than 450 hospitals nationwide in well-baby care, NICUs and in take-home programs to help new parents practice safe sleep for baby at home. The HALO SleepSack wearable blanket is the only product to carry the seals of leading SIDS organizations in the U.S. and Canada.

About the Survey

The online survey was conducted August 10-16, 2010 by Ipsos Public Affairs among:

- 519 adults age 18 and older with at least one child age 2 and younger
- 533 adults in their 50s and 60s with at least one grandchild

Quota sampling and weighting were employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the actual U.S. adult population according to Census data and to provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample.

Editor's note: HALO Innovations founder Bill Schmid and Dr. Tanya Remer Altmann are available for media interviews. Please contact Alise Kreditor at 516-482-4866 to arrange for an interview.