



PEDIATRIC SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROME (SIDS)



Escambia County, Florida - ALS/BLS Medical Protocol

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, or "crib death," is the sudden and unexpected death of an apparently healthy infant, usually under one year of age, which remains unexplained after a complete medical history, death scene investigation and postmortem examination.

SIDS almost always occurs when the infant is asleep or thought to be asleep.

Although there may be obvious signs of death (see [Sudden Infant Death Syndrome](#)), the Paramedic may attempt resuscitation of the infant for psychological reasons (e.g. parents peace of mind). There may also be some infants in which the Paramedic determines that a resuscitation attempt is not warranted (see [Death in the Field](#)). In either event, **the Paramedic or EMT should be prepared for a myriad of grief reactions from the parents and/or caregiver.**

It should also be noted, that some SIDS deaths are mistaken for child abuse. If there are possible signs of abuse (see [Signs of Child Abuse](#)), the Paramedic should continue as if it were a SIDS death, to avoid any unnecessary grief on the part of the parents and/or caregiver. The Paramedic should not attempt to determine whether or not child abuse has taken place. The scene should be treated as any other death scene, with attention to preservation of potential evidence. Remember, it is more common for an unexpected death of an infant to be SIDS.

Supportive Care


1. In most instances, resuscitation should be attempted (see appropriate Pediatric Protocols).
2. Assign a crewmember to assist the parents and/or caregiver and to explain the procedures.
3. If time permits, elicit a brief history and perform an environmental check. Document all findings on the EMS run report.
4. Once resuscitation is started, do not stop until directed to do so in the hospital by a physician.



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ALS Level 1

None

ALS Level 2 (*Physician Authorization Required*)


None



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