

Swaddling For Infants

Swaddling is a very old word and perhaps the first time many people heard the term was the reference in the bible to the baby Jesus being wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. The English Dictionary defines it as "to wrap a baby in swaddling clothes" which are described as strips of cloth. In more recent times there have been a number of studies done to examine the benefits, if any of swaddling. It has been suggested that small babies feel more secure when they are wrapped in a lightweight cotton blanket. Being swaddled on their backs has also been recommended to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). In a study published in May 2005 by researchers at the Pediatric Sleep Unit of the University Children's Hospital in Brussels which compared the sleeping habits of swaddled and unswaddled babies; it was found that babies did sleep significantly better when swaddled but that they were wakened more easily by outside noises. The heart rate of swaddled babies was also shown to be more responsive which was a positive indication. The researchers had been particularly interested to do this study because of the suggestion that swaddling infants on their back reduces the chances of SIDS. There have been campaigns advising against placing babies face down to sleep, it has been identified as a risk factor in SIDS. Many babies however are still settled to sleep in this way because parents feel that they settle better and cry less. It was suggested that perhaps this reported level of increased responsiveness to the outside environment made SIDS less likely although further larger studies would be needed to confirm this. Because the sample of babies involved in the research was small it is not possible to make any general recommendations but the study was interesting because it at least showed that there were possibilities of promoting better sleep and increased responsiveness with the potential of providing increased protection against SIDS. It is intriguing that the study supports and explains generally accepted parental wisdom of swaddling babies which has been passed down for generations. Obviously today we do not tend to think in terms of "swaddling" but rather of firm wrapping of babies, which seems to promote a feeling of security and may mimic the environment of the womb. Certainly when my children were young I always settled them to sleep in this way and it proved very successful. Sleep is very important for both baby's well being and parent's sanity and peace of mind. In order to guard against over heating I would suggest a lightweight cotton blanket as already mentioned. In my view organic cotton is the material of choice because of it is not impregnated with chemicals and therefore little risk of allergic reactions. It has increased breathability and does not incorporate any anti shrink resins. Above all it is beautifully soft against a baby's fragile skin. Because I have always believed in the benefits of so called "swaddling" we at Sonesuk have sourced a product which we feel can be personally endorsed. It is a square 75x75cm cotton interlock receiving blanket printed with a pretty farmyard motif with natural interlock on the reverse and a printed striped hood. If you want to hear more about organic cotton visit <http://www.sonesuk.com>

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Source: <http://www.colic-baby-bootcamp.com>