

INFANT & CHILD HEALTH

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome Information & Counseling Program



Example of a family helped by this program:

Sandy didn't smile as she watched the videotape of her baby boy, Cody. He was dressed in baseball pajamas and playing in the family's living room. "I wanted to show you what a healthy, robust little boy he is -- was," she said. On Tuesday, Aug. 17, Sandy was at work when she received a panicked call from Cody's babysitter. "Sandy, get to the hospital. Something's happened to Cody." Sandy didn't wait to hear the rest. She slammed the phone down and was running through the office, down the stairs, passing people on the way. Then she was out the door and at her car.

The babysitter later told Sandy that Cody had acted a little cranky after lunch. So, after feeding him his bottle, she laid him down and assumed he went to sleep. When she checked on him 15 or 20 minutes later, she found blood coming from his nose and mouth. She called 911 and started cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Two ambulances and a law enforcement officer arrived and, shortly afterward, so did Sandy. She had decided to go to the babysitter's house with the hope that she would get there before the ambulance left. Cody was in an ambulance with emergency medical personnel hovering over him. But all Sandy could do was to stand in the yard and scream for them not to let anything happen to her baby. She called her husband, Randy, from the babysitter's house and then went to the hospital in the second ambulance. Once there, neither she nor her husband were allowed to see Cody until after doctors told them there was nothing else they could do. "But we weren't ready to let him go," said Sandy as the tape continued to run. "We just couldn't. We begged them not to stop working on him and to do everything they could do." So the Life Flight helicopter flew him to the Tallahassee Memorial Regional Medical Center. There, doctors kept him alive until Wednesday, Aug. 18, when we realized there was no hope left of saving him.

Cody was 3 months, 6 days old when he died of sudden infant death syndrome. "It's your worst nightmare," Sandy said. "It's what I call a day-time nightmare. It was hell. It was so unbelievable. This was happening to me when a little earlier I was at work. Then it's like my whole life is turned completely upside down and it's been that way ever since." During the first few weeks after her baby's death, Sandy repeatedly suffered what she calls "insanity attacks." "I would be going to the coffee pot and I would feel as though I were going to lose my mind or that I had lost my mind - - that this was not real, that this had not happened to me," Sandy said. "You just can't believe it. You're at work one day and you get a call and the next time you look at your baby, his hands are purple and he's 90 degrees. I even opened his eye, and his eye was there but there was nothing behind it. It was just a blank stare." Sandy didn't want to get up in the mornings. She didn't even want to wake up. She simply wanted to die. "That's how bad it hurts, you get past those things as time goes by, but there's not a morning goes by that I'm still not depressed about it. And there's not a day goes by that I don't think about my baby. Randy and I both. It has really changed our lives. For three months we had a full complete life. Then, for whatever reason, it's gone. It's snatched out of your hands. And there's nothing you can do about it. Not one thing."



Because she wants to do something to help other parents who have endured or may face the death of an infant, Sandy is an active supporter of SIDS Alliance of Georgia. "I want to let people know that SIDS is very real," she said. "It does happen. I know. It happened to me. But I'm not the first one it's happened to, and I'm sorry I'm not going to be the last. I urge every parent, grandparent and care giver to learn about how to reduce their baby's risk of SIDS and pray daily that no one should have to endure this tragedy. No one."

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<http://health.state.ga.us/programs/sids/>

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