

Ministry in Haiti Sees Staggering Drop in Infant Mortality

We at LiveBeyond are excited to share our next steps to lower the infant mortality rate in our region of Thomazeau, Haiti. We have already seen a 50% decrease in infant mortality since the inception of our maternal health program. Yet the incorporation of safe sleep education and sleep resources for the mothers in the maternal health program can decrease infant mortality even further.

As the infant mortality rate has begun to plateau, we realize the next steps to continue decreasing infant mortality are beyond medical care and involve creating safe sleep environments for infants.

It is very common for Haitian parents to share a bed, also known as co-sleeping, with their infants simply because of the limited resources available to them. Unfortunately, co-sleeping can lead to life-threatening complications like Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

There are multiple factors that lead to SIDS, and co-sleeping is one of those factors. According to the Mayo Clinic, the following are environmental factors that lead to SIDS:

- Sleeping on the stomach or side. Babies placed in these positions to sleep might have more difficulty breathing than those placed on their backs.
- Sleeping on a soft surface. Lying face down on too soft of a surface can potentially block an infant's airway.
- Sharing a bed. While the risk of SIDS is lowered if an infant sleeps in the same room as his or her parents, the risk

increases if the baby sleeps in the same bed with parents, siblings or pets.

– Overheating. Being too warm while sleeping can increase a baby's risk of SIDS.

To continue to combat the infant mortality rate in Thomazeau, Haiti, we are developing partnerships to provide safe sleep bassinets to the mothers in the maternal health program. These safe sleep bassinets will allow the baby their own space to sleep safely on a firm surface and not become overheated by surrounding body temperatures. We will also start incorporating safe sleep education into the maternal health education curriculum.

By providing these resources to the mothers in the maternal health program, we hope to see the infant mortality rate continue to decrease in our region.

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LiveBeyond is a faith-based humanitarian organization bringing medical and maternal health care, clean water, education, orphan care, community development and the gospel of Jesus Christ to the oppressed in Thomazeau, Haiti. LiveBeyond purchased 63 acres in this region outside of Port-au-Prince. The LiveBeyond compound consists of the Hamilton Guest House, a medical clinic, worship center and a school.

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