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DECEMBER 8, 2004

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**DHR URGES PARENTS TO AVOID OVER HEATING
CHILDREN FOR COLD WEATHER**

ATLANTA (GA) – Keeping infants and toddlers warm during winter is an important priority, especially during cold and flu seasons. Dressing children in warm pajamas, covering them with thick quilts and turning up the heat in their rooms at bedtime is a common practice. When outdoors, dressing in layers provides extra warmth, however, it is equally important to remember that over bundling can lead to a child being overheated.

“Dressing children appropriately outdoors in cold weather is a must but when entering heated environments it may be necessary to remove some clothing to prevent over heating,” said Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H. director of the DHR Division of Public Health. “Overheating has been identified as a possible cause of SIDS or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and can be as easy as using excess covers on a bed or letting a child sleep in their jacket or coat while riding in a warm car.”

In addition to excess clothing and covers, elevated temperatures in the bedroom can also lead to over heating. As a precaution, DHR’s Infant and Child Health program along with the Georgia SIDS Project recommend that parents of infants and young children look out for the following warning signs and follow some simple recommendations to prevent overheating of infants and children:

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Warning Signs

- Constant sweating; damp hair or dampness around the neck and collar area
- The presence of heat rash or excess redness in the face
- Rapid breathing and restlessness.

Prevention Recommendations

- As a general rule when outdoors in cold temperatures, dress infants and children in layers and always make sure to cover their heads with a hat or hood. Layers hold in more heat and provide more comfort as opposed to a bulky jacket. If jackets or coats are used in addition to layering, be sure to remove them when in heated areas. It is recommended to remove a child's jacket when strapped into a car seat, particularly if the car is heated. Remember, if you are hot or uncomfortable with your jacket on, chances are your child is too.
- Keep your baby's face and head clear of blankets and other coverings during sleep to avoid suffocation. Consider using sleeper pajamas instead of blanket. If using a blanket, place baby in the back sleeping position with his/her feet at foot of crib with blanket no higher than the baby's chest and tuck blankets in around the mattress - not the baby's body.
- Avoid putting your baby to sleep in the family bed with parents and siblings. Adult bedding increases the risk of overheating, and suffocation - therefore increasing the risk of SIDS. If a mother chooses to bed share with baby to encourage breastfeeding, be sure to follow these safety precautions: Use a firm mattress and avoid pillows, quilts or heavy blankets near or under infant; place baby on back his/her back; and limit bed sharing to mother and baby.
- Educate babysitters, child care providers, grandparents and all other care givers about the risks associated with overheating, over dressing and SIDS.

For more information about the Georgia SIDS Project or safe sleep practices visit

<http://www.sidsga.org/>

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