



## Averting Crib Death

Bottle-fed babies may run a higher risk of crib death than breast-fed infants, if a new theory by a National

Cancer Institute scientist is correct. Crib death, which strikes down 10,000 infants per year with unexplained suddenness, is now being attributed by Dr. R. C. Reisinger to the growth of a common bacteria, *E. coli*, in the intestines of newborn babies. These bacteria proliferate in the baby's gut, he theorizes, manufacturing a toxin that is absorbed by the intestinal wall and passed into the bloodstream.

Breast milk inhibits the growth of *E. coli*; cow milk permits it.

While the theory is still just that—a theory—it is the first detailed one to explain the suddenness of crib death. And if the cause is indeed bacterial, a technique for averting crib death should quickly follow once the mechanism is fully understood. ●