

Parents Guide to Safer Sleeping

This leaflet explains how a parent should put their child to sleep to try and reduce any risk to their child and their health



Safer Sleeping

What is SID's?

Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) -sometimes known as 'cot death' - is the sudden, unexpected and unexplained death of a healthy baby.

In the UK, just under 300 babies die suddenly and unexpectedly every year. This statistic may sound alarming, but SIDS is rare and the risk of your baby dying from it is low.

SIDS usually occurs when a baby is asleep, although it can occasionally happen while they're awake.

It takes just 3 minutes for a baby to suffocate in their sleep

What causes SID's?

The exact cause of SIDS is unknown, but it's thought to be down to a combination of factors such as:

- Smoking whilst pregnant or after baby is born
- Premature babies
- Low birth weight
- Co- sleeping
- Minor illness
- Overweight
- Over crowded cots—too much bedding, cot bumpers, soft toys and pillows

What can I do?

There are many things a parent can do to help protect their child.

Smoking- stop smoking as soon as you know you are pregnant. Do not start smoking once you have had the baby. Seek advice from your midwife/GP on how to quit.

Room/Bed Sharing

- The safest place for your baby to sleep for the first 6 months is in a separate cot or Moses basket in the same room as you
- The chance of SIDS is lower when babies sleep in a separate cot in the same room as their parents.
- Never sleep on a sofa or in an armchair with your baby

Room Temperature

- It is important to make sure that your baby is a comfortable temperature - not too hot or too cold. The chance of SIDS is higher in babies who get too hot.
- A room temperature of 16-20°C, with light bedding or a lightweight well-fitting baby sleep bag that is comfortable and safe for sleeping babies.

Mattress and bedding

- You should use a firm and flat mattress that is protected by a waterproof cover. This will help keep the mattress clean and dry, as the cover can be wiped down.
- Make sure your baby's mattress is in good condition and that it fits the Moses basket or cot properly.
- Mattresses should be checked and rotated regularly to ensure they are suitable.
- Many parents choose to use grow bags for their child to sleep in. It is vital that you buy quality grow bags and they are suitable for the weather/season.

Car seats

- It is important that children should only be in a car seat for up to 30 minutes at one given time. This is due to it having a negative effect on their spine and airways if longer.
- If on long car journeys ensure you are able to stop every hour to take your child out of the car seat for a short period of time.
- It is vital that you never place a blanket or cover over the child's car seat as this quickly increases the temperature and will increase the risk of SIDS.

Breastfeeding

- As long ago as 1965 it was shown that babies under 3 months who died of SIDS were less likely to be breastfed than infants who did not die. Since then, numerous studies have supported the protective effects of breastfeeding, with one overview report concluding that breastfeeding reduces the incidence of SIDS by approximately half.
- Even a brief period of breastfeeding can be protective for your baby. It has been shown that both partial and exclusive breastfeeding have been associated with a lower SIDS rate, but that exclusive breastfeeding was associated with the lowest risk.

A clear cot is a safer cot

There is evidence to suggest that babies are at higher risk of SIDS if they have their heads covered and some items added to a cot may increase the risk of head-covering. There for we advise:

- No pillow or duvets
- No cot bumpers
- No soft toys
- No loose bedding
- No products to keep baby in one sleeping position such as straps or wedges.

How should I put my baby to sleep safely?

- Always place your baby on their back to sleep
- Place your baby 'feet to foot' (their feet touching the bottom of the cot, Moses basket or pram)
- Keep your baby's head uncovered. Ideally no covers or use a Grobag, but if you do chose to use a lightweight cover tucked in no higher than their shoulders.
- No loose covers, baby bumpers, toys.
- Keep an eye on the temperature, room thermometers are a good idea

What if my child becomes ill?

Dial 999 for an ambulance if your baby:

- stops breathing or turns blue
- is struggling for breath
- is unconscious or seems unaware of what's going on
- won't wake up
- has a fit for the first time, even if they seem to recover

There has been a 38% increase in these type of incidents over the last year in the Yorkshire and Humber region.

For more information around any of the topics discussed in this leaflet, do not hesitate to ask your child's key person or the nursery manager.

For further information on any of the topics raised in this leaflet please look at the websites listed below.

www.isisonline.org.uk (Isis sleeping)

Download Isis sleeping from the apple app store— 'Infant Sleeplab' (This is a free app)

www.lullabytrust.org.uk

www.unicef.org.uk/Documents/Baby

www.nhs.uk (for sleeping and stop smoking)

Alternatively speak to your midwife, Health Visitor or GP