

Identifying the risk of sudden infant death

A tool for midwives, family nurses and health visitors

Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden, unexpected death of an infant that remains unexplained after a detailed investigation. An infant is at a higher risk of SIDS during sleep, which is why it is sometimes referred to as 'cot death'.

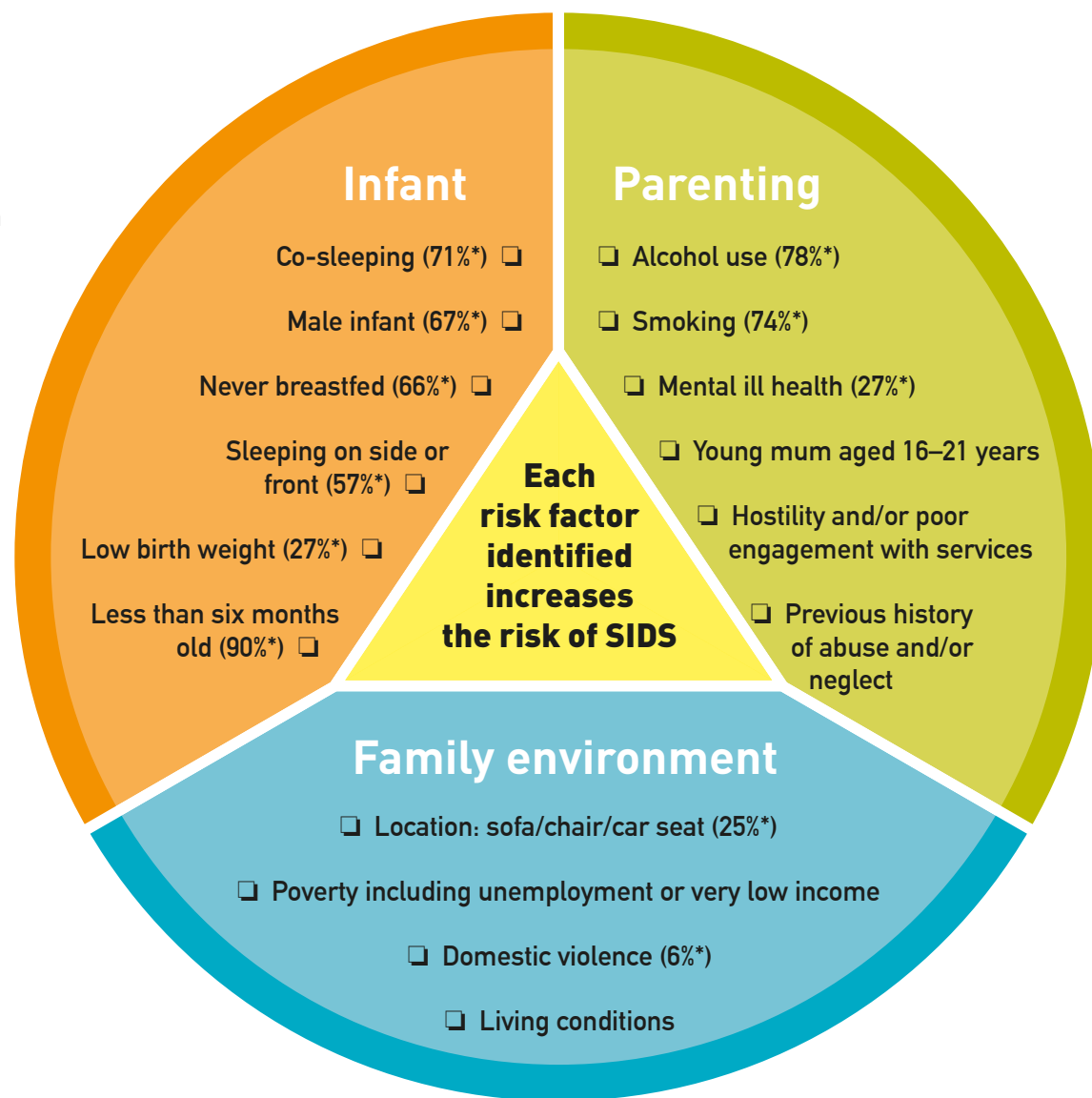
The cause of SIDS is unknown, but a review of child deaths in Northern Ireland from 2007–2013 by Queen's University Belfast and the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland has identified some risk factors associated with the syndrome.¹

This tool should be used by midwives, family nurses and health visitors during the antenatal and postnatal period to identify infants who may be vulnerable to SIDS. It should also prompt further conversation with parents so they are well informed and supported to reduce the risk of SIDS.

This tool may also be used by GPs, social workers and others working in early years settings who have opportunities to assess the sleeping environments of infants and reinforce safe sleeping messages.

1. Lazenbatt, A., Bunting, L., Devaney, J. and Hayes, D. (2015) *Northern Ireland Infant Death Thematic Review*. Belfast: Queen's University Belfast.

Risk factors for SIDS



*The percentage of SIDS cases in Northern Ireland where this risk factor was present. For example co-sleeping was a factor in 71% of cases. Risk factors without a percentage figure have been recorded in national and international studies.