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# Safe sleeping

Reducing the risk of sudden infant death

**Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden, unexpected death of an infant that remains unexplained.**

An infant is at a higher risk of SIDS during sleep, which is why it is sometimes referred to as 'cot death'.

Remember that cot death is rare, so don't let worrying about it stop you enjoying your baby's first few months. But do follow the advice overleaf to reduce the risks as much as possible.



## Do

- ✓ Breastfeed if you can.
- ✓ Put your baby to sleep in a moses basket or cot in your room for the first six months.
- ✓ Place your baby to sleep on their back in the 'feet to foot' position (feet touching the bottom of the cot).
- ✓ Use a light blanket firmly tucked no higher than the baby's shoulders.
- ✓ Use a clean, firm, well-fitting mattress.
- ✓ If using a baby sleeping bag, make sure it is fitted with neck and armholes, and no hood.

Sleeping with your baby can be risky especially if you are not breastfeeding. Speak to your midwife, health visitor, family nurse or GP if you feel strongly that you wish your baby to sleep with you instead of in a cot or moses basket.



## Don't

- ✗ Allow your baby to share a bed with anyone who has been smoking, drinking alcohol, taking drugs or is feeling overly tired.
- ✗ Allow anyone to smoke around your baby.
- ✗ Allow your baby to become overheated.
- ✗ Cover your baby's head.
- ✗ Allow your baby to sleep alone in an adult bed.
- ✗ Sleep with your baby on an armchair, sofa or waterbed.
- ✗ Leave your baby sleeping in a car seat for long periods or when not travelling in the car.
- ✗ Put pillows, loose blankets, cot bumpers or sleep positioners in your baby's cot.