Safe Sleep for your baby

How to reduce the risk of cot death

fsid
The cot death charity
Reg Charity No. 262761

FOR THE LOVE OF SLEEP
Welcome to our Safe Sleep Guide

We have joined together with the Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths to bring you FSID's BabyZone campaign which provides the latest advice on how to keep your baby safe and healthy both at night and during the day.

FSID (The Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths) is the UK's leading charity working to prevent sudden infant deaths and promote baby health. The Gro Company and FSID have been in partnership since 2001 following the launch of the Grobag Baby Sleep Bag in 2000. Our aim is to promote the Reduce the Risk of Cot Death campaign to as many new parents and carers of babies as possible because there are so many simple things that you can do to help keep your baby safe and happy.

If you have any questions about cot death, FSID runs a FREEPHONE helpline, Monday to Friday 10am–6pm and weekends and bank holidays 6pm–10pm, on 0808 802 6868. You can also visit their website at www.fsid.org.uk. For more information about Grobag and The Gro Company visit www.gro.co.uk

We really hope that you find this guide helpful. Please pass the message onto others too.

Rob and Ouvrielle Holmes, Founders — Grobag and The Gro Company
How to keep your baby safe and healthy...

The safest way for your baby to sleep is on the back

Babies who sleep on their backs are safer and healthier. It is not safe for babies to sleep on their fronts or sides.

Babies settle more easily on their backs if they have been placed to sleep that way from the very first day.

If your baby is less than six months old and you find him asleep on his tummy, gently turn him onto his back. Don’t feel you need to keep getting up all night to check on this. After this age, babies can usually roll onto their backs themselves so leave him to find his own position. Whatever your baby’s age always place them to sleep on the back.

Premature babies are slept on the front in hospital for special medical reasons. If your baby was born prematurely then make sure you keep her safe by sleeping her on the back when you take her home from hospital unless your doctor advises a different sleep position.

It can be dangerous if your baby’s head gets covered when she sleeps. Place her with her feet to the foot of the cot, with the bedclothes firmly tucked in and no higher than her shoulders, so she can’t wriggle down under the covers. Don’t worry if she wriggles up and gets uncovered. You can also use a baby sleep bag.
There are dangers in bed sharing

The safest place for your baby to sleep for the first six months is in a crib or cot in a room with you.

It’s especially dangerous for your baby to sleep in your bed if you (or your partner):
- are a smoker (even if you never smoke in bed or at home)
- have been drinking alcohol
- take medication or drugs that make you drowsy
- feel very tired; or if your baby:
- was premature (born before 37 weeks)
- was low birth weight (less than 2.5kg or 5½lb).

Don’t forget, accidents can happen:
- you might roll over in your sleep and suffocate your baby
- your baby could get caught between the wall and the bed
- your baby could roll out of your bed and be injured.

It’s very dangerous to sleep together with a baby on a sofa, armchair or settee and it is also risky to sleep a baby alone in an adult bed.
Breastfeed your baby

Breastfeed your baby and it will help keep him safe.

It’s the natural and best way to feed him and it increases his resistance to infection.

Settle your baby with a dummy

Using a dummy every time you settle your baby to sleep — day and night — can reduce the risk of cot death. If breastfeeding, do not give a dummy until breastfeeding is well-established.

Premature or sick babies in hospital may be given a dummy before breastfeeding is started and parents should follow doctors’ advice.

Don’t worry if the dummy falls out while your baby is asleep, and don’t force him to take a dummy if he doesn’t want it. Never coat the dummy in anything sweet.

Gradually wean him off a dummy after six months and before one year.

give me a dummy for my naps too
Babies don’t need hot rooms

Babies don’t need especially warm rooms. All-night heating is rarely necessary. Babies should never sleep next to a radiator or in direct sunlight. To keep an eye on the temperature buy a simple room thermometer, available for £2.75. Please call 020 7802 3200 or go to www.fsid.org.uk to order.

To check if your baby is too hot, look for sweating or feel your baby — don’t worry if his hands or feet are cool; that’s normal. If he’s too hot, remove one or more layers of blankets. Babies who are unwell need fewer — not more — bedclothes.
Choose lightweight blankets and clothing for sleep

If your baby is under a year old:
- don’t use a duvet, quilt or pillow
- don’t use electric blankets or hot water bottles
- use one or more layers of light blankets or use a baby sleep bag.

if you decide to swaddle your baby, don’t cover her head and only use thin materials. If you use a sheepskin, take it away as soon as your baby starts trying to roll onto her tummy.

if you use a baby sleep bag, it needs to be without a hood, very lightweight and the right size around the neck so your baby won’t slip down inside the bag. Never use with a duvet.
Sleep your baby on a firm, clean, dry mattress

It is very important that your baby’s mattress is kept clean and dry. Ideally you should buy a new mattress for each new baby. If you are not able to do this, use the one you have as long as it was made with a completely waterproof cover (e.g. PVC) and has no tears, cracks or holes. Clean it thoroughly and dry it.

Check that the mattress:
• is in good condition
• fits the cot without any gaps
• is firm, not soft
• doesn’t sag.

Never sleep your baby on a pillow, cushion, beanbag, or waterbed. Never sleep together with your baby on a sofa. Make sure the cot is in good condition particularly if it’s second hand or old.

Check the gaps between the bars are less than 6.5cm, and the space between the mattress and cot is no more than 3cm. If you use a Moses basket, it should have only a thin lining.