



Safe Sleep for Newborns

Keeping your baby safe is at the forefront of every parent's mind, but unfortunately in this day and age, there are so many items for sale that are not safe. Some may be marketed in a way that makes you think it is safe, or intended for sleep, but come with small print warnings "to be used only while under supervision" or a "safer" statement.

Ultimately it's all about making informed decisions that feel right for you & your family, so educate yourself and choose what works for you!

Examples of unsafe items for infant sleep

Baby nests / pods / cocoon

Bouncer / inclined sleeper



Cot bumper



Infant Pillow



Side sleep wedge



Hammocks



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BABy & CHILd SLEEP SUPPORT

The safest place for your newborn baby to sleep is in their own clear, flat, firm sleep space, on their back.

Your baby should always be placed to sleep on their back, not on their side or tummy

- Babies sleeping on their sides have double the SUDI risk. If they turn from their side onto their front, the SUDI risks are six times higher.
- SIDS rates in the US dropped by 50% after the "Back to Sleep" campaign started in 1994.
- Once your baby is strong enough to roll themselves onto their side or tummy, it is safe for them to sleep in this position if they put themselves there, and they are not swaddled.

Co-Sleeping is recommended in the form of room sharing, but not bed-sharing

- A review of 188 infant deaths in Auckland, NZ found that 64% of SUDI cases were bed sharing
- Room sharing for the first 6 -12 months had been shown to reduce the risk of SUDI
- While the AAP & MOH do not recommend bed sharing, full stop and I, as a sleep consultant cannot encourage active/intentional bed sharing, statistics show us that the majority of parents will bed share at some stage, often reactively i.e. out of exhaustion to get at least some sleep
- If you are considering bed sharing for whatever reason (personal preference, cultural background etc.), please look into your individual situation and at your individual baby. Get all the information you can about bed sharing, its benefits & potential risk factors, assess all of them in context to your own family and then make an informed decision that you feel comfortable with!

Your baby's bassinet/crib/cot should be clear of anything except your baby

- Blankets: newborn babies who are swaddled and in a bassinet could use a blanket, as long as their feet are down the end of the bassinet and the blanket is tucked in at the bottom and sides so there is no risk of it coming undone and covering their face.
- Older babies in a cot should use a sleeping bag instead of blankets to keep warm to minimise the risk (from 18 months onwards are blankets & pillows considered safe)
- Toys: Babies who are un-swaddled, in a cot for room to move and old enough to consciously move objects & themselves, can have a small (handkerchief sized) lovey/cuddly in the cot with them, but all other toys should be removed.
- Bumper pads: these pose both a suffocation and strangulation risk. All cot bumpers should be removed, even air mesh ones.
- Baby nests/pods: the standards that some of these meet, relate only to the mattress or the fabric used as a covering. None of these baby nests/pods actually meet the safety standard required for a bassinet or crib/cot and should never be used for unsupervised sleep. Re-breathing of carbon dioxide is the main risk with these sleep products.
- A Pepi Pod is a safer alternative
http://www.changeforourchildren.nz/pepi_pod_programme

The bassinet/crib/cot needs to be a flat sleep space. This is due to positional asphyxiation that can occur when a baby's head is tilted forward, blocking their airway.

- Inclined cots/bassinets, hammocks, 'sleepers', bouncers, car seats/capsules etc. all pose a risk for positional asphyxiation, due to the forward bend head position, as very young babies can't lift their head independently yet.
- If baby falls asleep in the car, it's OK, don't stress, just make sure to check on them regularly (every 40min when asleep) and give them a little stretch about every hour when you're on a long car trip.

- Once the car is no longer moving, take them out from the car seat/capsule, or monitor them very closely while still asleep, until they wake up.

Your baby's bassinet/crib/cot mattress needs to be firmer than it would be for adults due to the following reasons:

1. To ensure your baby is not sinking into it, making an indent which creates a 'side'. This then becomes a similar risk to a baby pod / nest / cocoon: the carbon dioxide your baby is breathing out is absorbed into the surrounding fibres instead of vanishing. Therefore your baby will be re-breathing the carbon dioxide. When oxygen saturation becomes too low due to higher carbon dioxide inhalation, this can become fatal.
2. Firm mattresses are needed to support the 300 bones (compared to the 206 we have as adults!) that babies are born with. Their bones are very soft and many of the bones are still not connected together. With more bones and rapid development of their bones and spines, babies need far firmer mattresses than adults.



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