

Safe Sleeping Practice

Despite the overall decrease in the number of babies dying as a result of Sudden Unexpected Death in Infants (SUDI), the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel continues to see a worrying number of cases. There has been a shift towards these tragedies happening mainly in families whose circumstances put them at risk of harm, not just of SUDI, but of several other adverse outcomes.

Almost all of the SUDI events notified to the Panel involved parents co-sleeping with infants in unsafe sleep environments, often after consuming drugs and alcohol. In light of Covid-19, there is a worry SUDI may increase due to the pressures of lockdown. Domestic violence, anxiety about money, unsuitable housing, substance and alcohol abuse, as well as disruption to normal routines may mean more families are unable to engage effectively with safer sleeping advice.

Please consider both safe sleep practice and risk factors arising that may impact on this at every contact opportunity and specifically within any assessment/review of vulnerable families.

Supporting you and your baby's sleeping

Sleeping can have a huge impact on your general wellbeing. Babies sleep routine can be challenging for new parents, and so it is important they have considered strategies to support them with this. The [Lullaby Trust](#) provides key information about safe sleeping and covers the topic of co sleeping and how to undertake this as safely as possible.

Key messages

- The safest place for your baby to sleep is in their crib in your bedroom.
- You should always place your baby on their back to sleep and not on their front or side.
- Sleeping your baby on their back (known as the supine position) every night is one of the most protective actions you can take to ensure your baby is sleeping as safely as possible.
- There is substantial evidence from around the world to show that sleeping your baby on their back at the beginning of every sleep or nap (day and night) significantly reduces the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).



Do Not Co-sleep with your baby if:

- You or your partner smoke (even if not in bedroom)
- You or your partner have had alcohol or are on any medication
- You are extremely tired
- Your baby was born prematurely (37 weeks or below)
- Your baby was born weighing less than 2.5kg or 5 1/2lbs
- You are on a sofa as this can increase the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) by 50 times.

Co-sleeping guidance:

- Babies should be slept in a clear sleep space, which is easy to create in a cot or Moses basket.

When choosing to co sleep

- Keep pillows, sheets, blankets away from your baby or any other items that could obstruct your baby's breathing or cause them to overheat.
- Follow all the Lullaby Trust safer sleep advice to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS such as sleeping baby on their back.
<https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice/co-sleeping/>
- Avoid letting pets or other children in the bed
- Make sure baby won't fall out of bed or get trapped between the mattress and the wall.

