

CHERUBS CLUB

Safer Sleep for Babies Your Guide to Peaceful and Secure Sleep

Providing your baby with a safe sleep environment is one of the most important things you can do to protect their well-being and reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). While every family is unique, the foundation of safer sleep remains the same: a secure and supportive space that meets your baby's needs.

For more detailed advice and support, visit www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice/ a leading resource on safer sleep practices and SIDS prevention.

The Safest Sleep Space

Your baby's sleep space should be clear, flat, and separate. A cot, Moses basket, or crib with a firm mattress is ideal. Keep the area free of pillows, quilts, bumpers, soft toys, or sleep cushion beds, as these can increase the risk of overheating or obstruct breathing.

For optimal safety:

- Always place your baby on their back for every sleep (unless your doctor has advised you of a medical reason not to do so)
- Use a firm, flat mattress with no raised edges or cushioning.
- Keep their head uncovered by placing them in a sleeping bag or tucking blankets securely at chest height with their feet positioned at the bottom of the cot ("feet-to-foot").
- Maintain a room temperature between 16-20°C to prevent overheating.

Room Sharing

For the first six months, your baby is safest sleeping in their own clear space in the same room as you, whether for night-time sleep or naps. This makes it easier to monitor their well-being and respond to their needs.

Breastfeeding

We understand that it is not possible or not preferred to breastfeed however, if you should decide to, breastfeeding for at least the first two months can reduce the risk of SIDS by nearly half.

Smoking Prevention

Creating a smoke-free environment during pregnancy and after birth is essential. Babies exposed to smoke face significantly higher risks. If you or your partner smoke, consider seeking support to quit to protect your baby's health.

Bed-sharing with Awareness

Bed-sharing is a personal choice and can be a really beautiful experience. As always, it is crucial to understand the risks and make an informed decision.

Adult beds have not been designed or safety tested for infant sleep in the same way as, for example, a cot or Moses basket. Whether you choose to bed-share, or it is unplanned, it is best to think ahead.

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If you choose to bed-share:

- Ensure there are no gaps where your baby could become trapped, in the bed frame or headboard, between the mattress and the wall or fall out of the bed
- Remove slatted/decorated headboards
- Keep pillows, heavy bedding, or any other items that child cover their head or cause them to overheat.
- Do not bring other children or pets into bed with you. This will help to reduce the risk of accidents.
- Never sleep with your baby on a sofa or armchair, as this significantly increases the risk of SIDS.

Avoid bed-sharing if:

- You or your partner have consumed alcohol, taken drugs (including medications that cause drowsiness), or smoked.
- Your baby was born prematurely or with a low birth weight.

Never leave your baby alone in an adult bed. It's important to consider any risks that an adult bed may pose to your baby, especially while you are asleep. As your baby develops, becomes more mobile and can move around, the risks can change, so we recommend checking your bed regularly to prevent possible accidents.

Travel and Daytime Sleep

When travelling or during daytime naps, ensure your baby sleeps in a safe space such as a portable crib or Moses basket. Avoid letting your baby sleep in car seats, bouncers, or nests for prolonged periods, as these do not provide the flat, firm surface needed for safer sleep.

Recognising the Importance of Consistency

Safe sleep practices should be applied consistently across all settings—at home, in daycare, and while visiting family or friends. This consistency helps ensure your baby remains safe, no matter where they rest.

This guide empowers you to make safer sleep decisions with confidence, ensuring your baby enjoys restful nights. If you'd like further resources or personalised support, feel free to reach out!