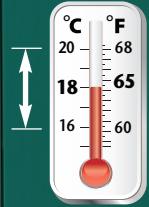


Safe Sleep for your Baby

Reduce the Risk of Cot Death



Ideal room temperature for your baby is in the range 16–20°C.

Key Points

- *Always place your baby on their back to sleep.*
- *Don't smoke during pregnancy.*
- *Don't smoke or allow anyone to smoke in the home or in the car.*
- *The safest place for your baby to sleep at night is in a cot in your room.*
- *Don't let your baby get too hot.*
- *Place baby with their feet to the foot of the cot.*
- *Make sure the baby's head stays uncovered when asleep.*
- *Don't put quilts, duvets, bumper pads, pillows or toys in the cot.*
- *Don't fall asleep in bed with your baby if you or your partner smoke or have taken alcohol, drugs or medication that makes you sleep more heavily. Don't fall asleep in bed with your baby if they are less than three months old, were born prematurely or had a low birth weight (less than 2.5kg or 5.5lbs when born).*
- *Never fall asleep with your baby on a sofa or an armchair.*
- *If your baby seems unwell, call the doctor quickly.*

Back to sleep

Always place your baby on their back to sleep.



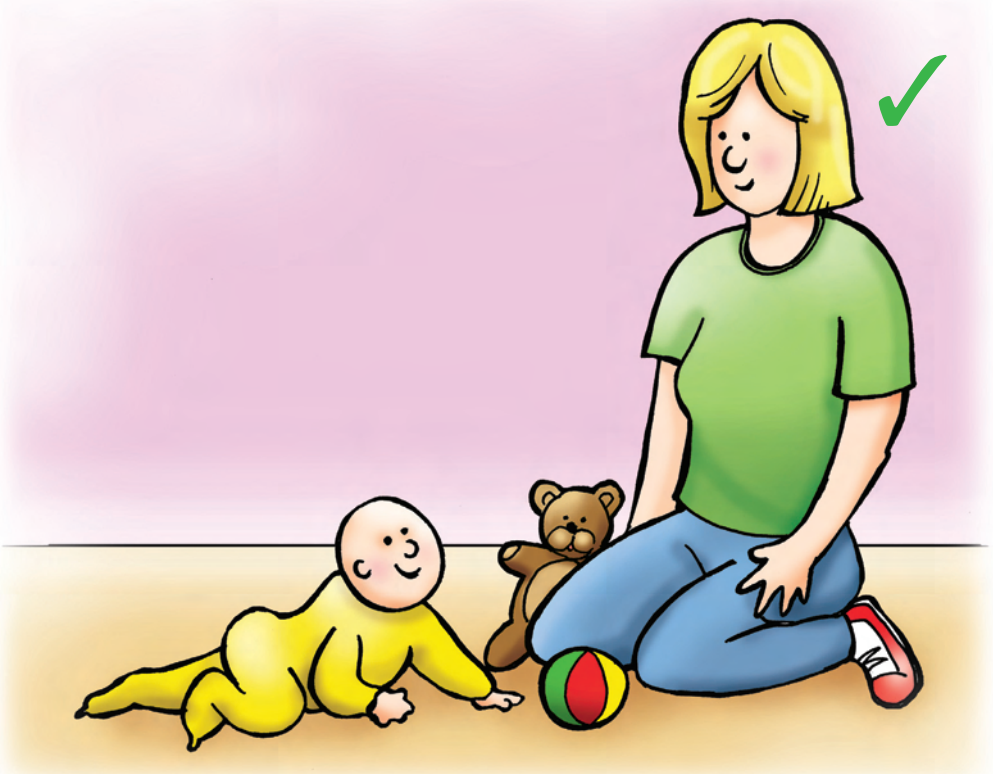
Babies who sleep on their tummies have a higher risk of cot death.

Place your baby to sleep on their back. This does not increase the risk of choking or vomiting.

When your baby is older and able to roll from back to front and back again, let them find their own position to sleep. You should still place them on their back at the start of sleep time.

It is not safe to place your baby on their side to sleep because they may roll onto their tummy.

Let your baby have time on their tummy when they are awake.



When your baby is *awake*, let them spend some time on their tummy and sitting up, while you supervise. Tummy time helps your baby to exercise and strengthen muscles in their neck, arms and shoulders. It also helps their brain develop and stops the back of their head getting flat. If your baby falls asleep when on their tummy, be sure to place them onto their back.



Remember... *On their back to sleep*
 On their front when awake to play

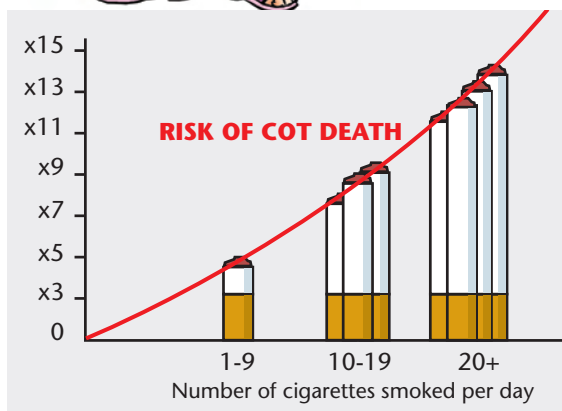
Smoke-free zone for your baby

Do not smoke during pregnancy.



Smoking during pregnancy increases your baby's risk of cot death.

If you smoke during pregnancy your baby is more likely to be born prematurely or have low birth weight. Premature and low birth weight babies have a higher risk of cot death.



Your baby's risk goes up with every cigarette you smoke a day and with every smoker in your home.

So if you and your partner both smoke, your baby's risk is higher than if only one of you smoke.

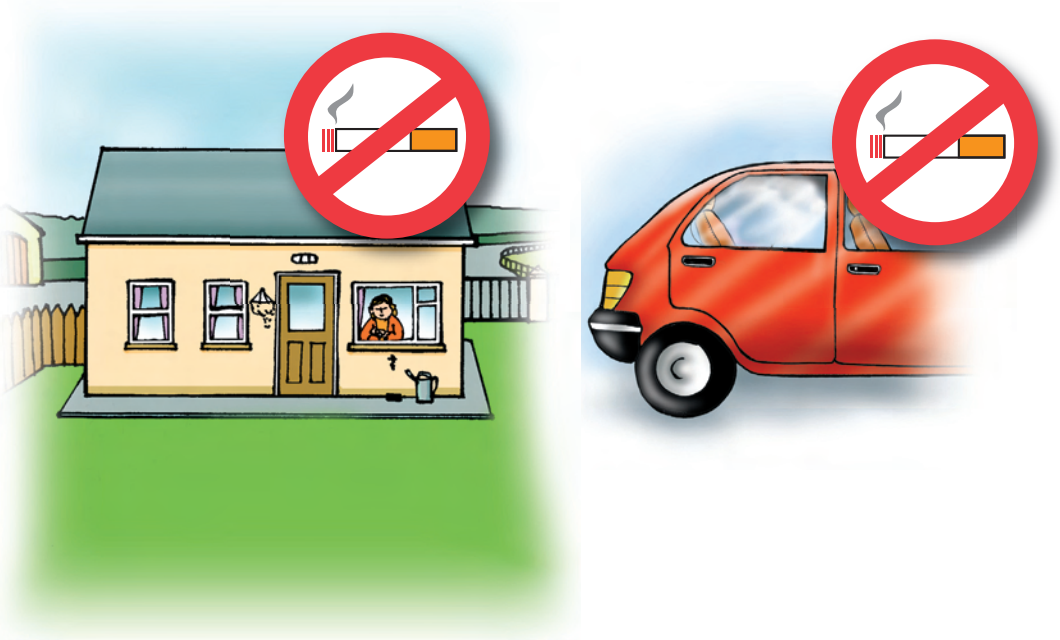
Remember...

The more you smoke, the higher the risk.

For information and support on quitting smoking, phone the National Smokers' Quitline on Callsave **1850 201 203** Monday - Saturday, 8am - 10pm or visit the website www.giveupsmoking.ie

Smoke-free zone for your baby

Do not smoke or allow anyone to smoke in the home or in the car.



Being exposed to cigarette smoke after birth also increases a baby's risk of cot death.

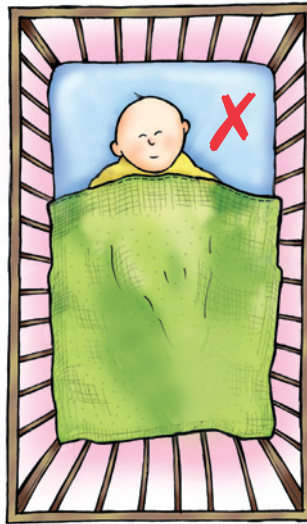
It is most important that no one smokes around your baby. When you go out, don't bring your baby into smoky places.

Remember... *If you cut out smoking when you're pregnant and keep your baby away from cigarette smoke after birth, you can greatly reduce their risk of cot death.*

For information and support on quitting smoking, phone the National Smokers' Quitline on Callsave **1850 201 203** Monday - Saturday, 8am - 10pm or visit the website www.giveupsmoking.ie

Feet to foot

Place your baby with their feet to the foot of the cot and keep their face uncovered.



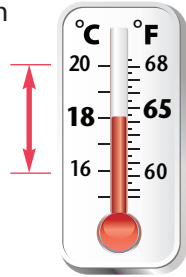
- To stop your baby wriggling down under the covers, place them to sleep with their **feet to the foot** of the cot, basket or pram and have the covers below their shoulders.
- Tuck covers in loosely but securely and make sure they cannot slip over the baby's head.
- **Check regularly to make sure baby's head stays uncovered.** If the bedding slips over their head while they are asleep, they are at increased risk of cot death.
- Don't use soft bedding such as pillows, quilts, duvets and bumper pads in the cot.
- Don't leave toys, teddies or other things in the cot.
- Use a clean, firm mattress that fits the cot correctly so your baby can't get trapped in a gap between the mattress and the edge of the cot.

Remember... Face up, face free for a safe sleep.

Don't let your baby get too hot (or too cold).

Overheating can increase your baby's risk of cot death. A baby can overheat when asleep because of too much bedding or clothes or because the room is too hot.

- To check how warm your baby is, feel their tummy – it should feel warm but not hot. If their tummy feels hot or if they are sweating anywhere your baby is too warm, so remove some of the bedding. Other signs include flushed, red cheeks and fast breathing. Don't worry if your baby's hands and feet feel cool – this is normal.

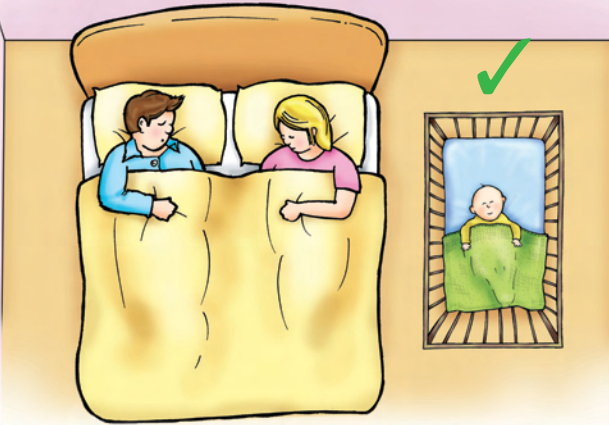


- Do not overdress your baby – a nappy, vest and babygro are enough. They can wear less in warm weather.
- Take off baby's hat and extra clothes as soon as you are indoors.
- Make sure the room your baby sleeps in is not too warm. The room temperature should range from 16 - 20°C (62 - 68°F). If the room feels too warm for you it is too warm for your baby. Consider getting a room thermometer so that you can easily check the temperature of your baby's bedroom.
- Never place the cot, pram or bed next to a radiator, heater or fire or in direct sunshine.
- Don't wrap your baby in too many blankets. Sheets and light blankets are best, as you can adjust the temperature by adding one or taking one away. In warm weather your baby may not need any bed covers at all. Remember, a folded blanket counts as two layers.
- Do not use duvets, quilts or pillows.
- Make sure the bedding can't cover your baby's head. Babies lose heat through their head so covering their head may cause your baby to become overheated. You can use a sleeveless baby gro bag instead of blankets, as it will not cover the head if you use it properly. It should fit correctly around the neck so that your baby's head cannot slip down inside the bag. It must be light, with no hood. Do not use any other bedding with it. The bag should be the right size for your baby with enough room for them to move their legs and feet.

Remember...

Overheating can increase your baby's risk of cot death.

The safest place for your baby to sleep is in a cot in your room.



Babies who sleep in a cot in their parents' bedroom are less at risk of cot death than if they are on their own in a separate room. Keep your baby's cot in your room for the first six months.

A separate cot is safest. Bed-sharing can be dangerous.

Do not share a bed with your baby

if you or your partner:

- smoke (no matter where you smoke - even if you never smoke in bed)
- have taken alcohol, drugs or medication that may make you sleep more heavily
- are extremely tired.

or

if your baby:

- Is less than three months old
- was born prematurely (born before 37 weeks) or
- had a low birth weight (less than 2.5kg or 5.5lbs when born).

Babies who share their parents' bed can slip under the bed covers. They can roll under an adult, get caught between the bed and the wall or fall out of the bed. Your baby should not share a bed with your other children.

Never fall asleep with your baby on a sofa, couch, armchair or beanbag – this is very dangerous.



Breastfeeding



- Breastfeeding is the healthiest and best way to feed your baby. Aim at breastfeeding for as long as you can. Breastfed babies have a reduced risk of infection.
- Some mothers like to bring their babies into bed to breastfeed. But pay careful attention to the guidelines on safe sleep in this booklet.
- It's safe to feed your baby in bed as long as you put them back in their own cot to sleep.

Soothers

- Research has found that giving a baby a soother (dummy) every time they are being put down to sleep may reduce the risk of cot death.
- If you are breastfeeding and you choose to give your baby a soother, wait until after one month of age to make sure breastfeeding is well established.
- Don't worry if the soother falls out while your baby is asleep.
- Do not force your baby to take a soother if they refuse it.
- Do not attach strings and cords to soothers, as these could strangle your baby or cause them to choke.
- Keep soothers clean and never dip them in sugar, honey or other foods and drinks.



If your baby seems unwell, get medical advice early and quickly.



Dial 999 or 112 for an ambulance if your baby:

- *is not responding to you,*
- *stops breathing or turns blue, or*
- *cannot be woken or has a fit.*



Call the doctor if your baby is drinking less than half their normal amount of milk. Babies and young children often have minor illnesses which you should not be too worried about. If you find it hard to tell whether an illness is more serious, call your doctor for advice.

Apnoea or breathing monitors cannot prevent cot death. These monitors alert parents/carers to apnoea (stopped breathing) or an apparent life-threatening event.



**IN EMERGENCY
DIAL 999 or 112
AMBULANCE • FIRE • GARDAÍ**

What is cot death?

Cot death is another name for **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)**. It is the sudden and unexpected death of a seemingly healthy baby. No cause of death can be found, even after a post-mortem examination.

However, cot death does not only happen in cots. It may happen in a pram, bed, car seat or anywhere a baby is resting. A seemingly healthy baby is put down to sleep and when next checked they are found dead. There has been no sound or sign of a struggle.

Because we do not know what causes cot death, we cannot make sure it won't happen. But research has shown that you can take steps to reduce the risk of cot death. If you follow the guidelines in this booklet you will help reduce your baby's risk as much as possible.

The information in this booklet is for everyone who looks after a baby, not just parents. Please share this information with your family, friends, childminder, crèche and babysitters – and anyone else who looks after your baby.

Cot death is

- *sudden and unpredictable*
- *a recognised medical disorder*
- *the most common cause of death in babies from four weeks to one year*
- *most common between two and four months of age (although it can happen to older babies).*
- *only diagnosed when all other possible causes of death are ruled out.*

Cot death is not

- *caused by immunisations*
- *caused by vomiting or choking*
- *suffocation*
- *preventable – but you can reduce the risks by following the guidelines in this booklet.*

Research into the cause of cot death is going on all the time.



Please note:

Cot death is still quite rare. Don't let fear spoil your time with your baby.



If you have any questions about the
information in this booklet please contact:

National Sudden Infant Death Register

George's Hall
The Childrens' University Hospital
Temple Street
Dublin 1
Tel: 01 878 8455
Helpline: 1850 391 391
www.sidsireland.ie

The Irish Sudden Infant Death Association

Carmichael House
4 North Brunswick Street
Dublin 7
Tel: 01 873 2711
www.isida.ie