

Reduce the risk of COT DEATH

Place your baby on their back to sleep,
in a cot in a room with you

Never fall asleep with your baby on a
couch or armchair

Don't share a bed with your baby if you
or your partner:

- ✧ Smoke
- ✧ Have recently drunk *any* alcohol
- ✧ Have taken medication or drugs that could make you sleepy, including methadone or illegal drugs

Keep your baby smoke free both before
and after birth

Make sure your baby doesn't get too
hot and keep your baby's head
uncovered when sleeping

Scottish
COT DEATH
Trust





What is Cot Death?

Cot death – also known as Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) – are terms used when a baby, usually under 1 year of age, with no previous history of illness, dies unexpectedly.

Sadly, this can happen wherever a baby is sleeping.

Take a few minutes to read this booklet and if there's anything that you want to know more about, talk to your midwife or health visitor or visit

www.scottishcotdeathtrust.org

Cot death is rare and research is continuing to help us understand more about it.

Follow the advice in this booklet to help reduce the risks

The safest place for your baby to sleep at night, during the first six months, is on their back in a cot in your room

Never fall asleep with a baby on a couch or armchair

Babies can get trapped down the side or in the cushions or you might roll over and suffocate your baby.

Don't share a bed with your baby if you or your partner:

- * Smoke
- * Have recently drunk **any** alcohol
- * Have taken medication or drugs that could make you sleepy, including methadone or illegal drugs
- * Are unusually tired to the point where you would find it difficult to respond to your baby

The risks of bed sharing are also increased if your baby:

- * was premature (born before 37 weeks)
- * was of low birth weight (less than 2.5 kg or 5 lbs 8 oz)

There is a risk that your baby might overheat in your bed, or you might roll over in your sleep and suffocate your baby. Your baby could get caught between the wall and the bed, or could roll out of the bed and be injured.

It's lovely to have your baby with you for a cuddle or a feed but it's safest to put your baby back in their cot before you go to sleep.



Never fall asleep with a baby on a couch or armchair

Place your baby on their **BACK** to sleep

Place your baby on their back to sleep, in a cot in the same room as you. This is the most important thing that you can do to reduce the risk of cot death.

Babies placed on their backs are not more likely to choke.

When your baby is old enough to roll over they should be allowed to do so.

Put your baby to sleep with their feet at the bottom of their cot or pram, 'feet to foot'. This is so they can't slip down under the covers. Don't use a pillow for a baby aged under 1 year.

You may have heard about babies developing 'flat head'. This is known as plagiocephaly.

This may happen when babies lie on their back for a long time. As your baby grows their head will become rounder again. Make sure your baby always sleeps on their back but when awake has supervised 'playtime' on their tummy. There is more information about this at www.scotland.gov.uk/plagiocephaly



Place your baby on their back to sleep

Keep your baby SMOKE FREE

Smoking in pregnancy, and after your baby is born, increases the risk of cot death. It's really important that both you and your partner give up smoking.



Each year, a large proportion of cot deaths occur in homes where one or more adults has smoked.



Don't smoke or allow anyone else to smoke in the same room as your baby. It's best if **nobody** smokes in the house, including visitors. Anyone wishing to smoke should go outside.

Do not smoke or allow anyone to smoke in a car your baby is travelling in.

There are lots of places where you can get support and advice about quitting. Ask your health visitor or midwife, talk to your pharmacist, or phone the NHS Smoking Helpline free on 0800 84 84 84 or visit the website: www.canstopsmoking.com

Smoking when pregnant increases the risk of cot death





Breastfeeding your baby reduces the risk of cot death

It's important to breastfeed your baby. Breast milk gives babies all the nutrients they need for the first six months of life and helps protect them from infection. It also reduces mothers' chances of getting certain diseases later in life and allows you and your baby to get closer both physically and emotionally.

It's natural to have questions and/or need some support to breastfeed successfully. Your midwife, health visitor or GP can help.

Breastfeeding is good for you and your baby

Using a Dummy



Some research suggests that it is possible that using a dummy when putting a baby down to sleep might reduce the risk of cot death.

If you choose to use a dummy, wait until your baby is over 4 weeks old, and breastfeeding is well established. Breastfeeding is good for you and your baby.

Stop giving a dummy to your baby to go to sleep between 6 and 12 months.

Don't force your baby to take a dummy or put it back in if your baby spits it out. **Don't use a neck cord.** Don't put anything sweet on the dummy, and don't offer during awake time.

Using an orthodontic dummy is best as it adapts to your baby's mouth shape.

Don't use a neck cord if using a dummy

If your baby is unwell,

GET MEDICAL ADVICE

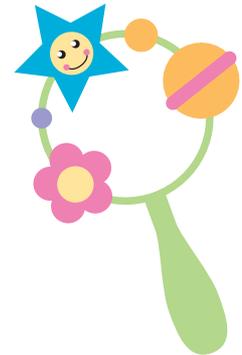
Babies sometimes have minor illnesses. Make sure your baby drinks plenty of fluids and is not too hot. It may be difficult to judge whether an illness requires medical attention.

If you are worried, call NHS 24 on 08454 242424.

Urgent medical attention is needed if your baby:

- * Stops breathing or goes blue
- * Is floppy and does not respond when touched
- * Cannot be wakened
- * Has glazed eyes and does not focus on anything
- * Has a fit
- * Has a 'pin prick' rash/marks or purple blotches anywhere on the body that do not fade under pressure

DIAL 999 and ask for an ambulance



If your baby is unwell, get medical advice immediately

For further information please contact:

The Scottish Cot Death Trust
Royal Hospital for Sick Children
Yorkhill
Glasgow G3 8SJ
Tel No: 0141 357 3946
Fax No: 0141 334 1376
www.scottishcotdeathtrust.org

Following the advice and information contained in this leaflet may reduce the risk of cot death but is not guaranteed to prevent it altogether.

Further copies of this leaflet are available from your local NHS Health Promotion Department, also on request in Braille, audio formats and community languages.

Other websites for information

Ready Steady Baby – www.readysteadybaby.org.uk

The Breastfeeding Network – www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

Plagiocephaly – www.scotland.gov.uk/plagiocephaly

Smokeline 0800 848484 – www.canstopsmoking.com

International Society for the Study and Prevention of Infant Death – www.ispid.org

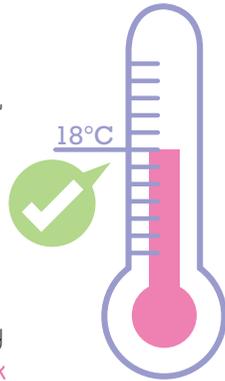


Make sure your baby doesn't get too **HOT** OR **COLD**

Babies can overheat because of too much bedding or clothing, or because the room is too hot. Keep the room at about 18°C (65°F). If it is too hot for you, it's too hot for your baby.

Use lightweight covers in your baby's cot and keep your baby's head uncovered.

For more information see Ready Steady Baby on www.readysteadybaby.org.uk



Blankets & Covers



For newborn babies, cellular blankets (the ones the hospital use) are best. Cellular blankets have small holes in them and keep your baby warm, without the danger of them overheating. Baby duvets, fleece blankets and cot bumpers are not recommended for newborn babies.

If your baby is sweating or their tummy feels hot to the touch, take off some of the bedding. Don't worry if your baby's hands or feet feel cool – this is normal if your baby is otherwise well.

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This document is also available on the Scottish Government website: www.scotland.gov.uk

APS Group Scotland
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For further information on cot death, please contact:
The Scottish Cot Death Trust
www.scottishcotdeathtrust.org

For further copies of this leaflet, please contact:
Child & Maternal Health Division
Email: maternalandinfanthealth@scotland.gsi.gov.uk