

Safe Sleeping Practices

What is SIDS?

SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome) is the unexpected death of a healthy baby under 12 months during sleep, with no clear cause even after investigation.

It is rare, but it can happen.

SIDS is most common when babies are 2–4 months old. It's a heartbreakingly common experience for families, and while the exact cause is unknown, there are certain things that can increase the chances.

What increases the risk of SIDS?

- Sleeping on their tummy or side – this can block a baby's airway.
- Being around cigarette smoke – before or after birth.
- Co-sleeping in unsafe conditions – especially if baby's parents smoke, drink alcohol, or take drugs.
- Overheating – from heavy blankets or rooms that are too warm.
- Unsafe bedding – like soft mattresses, pillows, or loose blankets which can accidentally cover baby's mouth.



How safe sleeping helps prevent SIDS

Following safe sleeping guidelines can reduce your baby's risk of SIDS:

- Always place your baby on their back to sleep.
- Keep your baby's face and head uncovered to avoid suffocation and overheating.
- Provide a smoke-free environment for your baby, during pregnancy and after birth.
- Use a firm, flat mattress in a safe cot or bassinet.
- Keep your baby in their own sleep space, but in the same room as you for the first 6–12 months.

Why safe sleep matters

Safe sleeping practices create a protective environment for your baby, helping to reduce risks linked to SIDS.

They're simple but powerful actions you can take to keep your baby safe.

If you have any concerns or questions, yarn with your GP, midwife or healthcare worker for advice and support.

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