

Protecting Infants from SUDI

Babies are safest when they sleep face-up (on the back), with the face clear (plenty of space in front of their face and no pillows), in their own safe sleep space and are smokefree from conception.

DO	DO NOT
Keep baby 'smoke free] in the womb and after birth	DO NOT sleep babies in a place where the face can get covered or where they can get trapped or strangled - avoid pillows, soft surfaces, gaps and cords
Sleep babies on their backs on a firm flat surface, not propped – any other position increases risk	DO NOT sleep babies in the same bed or on the same surface as adults who are intoxicated or very tired
Breast feed	DO NOT sleep babies in spaces not designed for infant sleep (eg, couches or adult beds) ¹
Sleep babies in a room with parents/caregivers when the parent/caregiver is also asleep	DO NOT over heat or wrap too tight

Risks of SUDI are reduced if babies sleep alone, not sharing a sleeping surface with anyone (adult or child) while they are under three months of age.

Where infants are more vulnerable², extra efforts are needed to reduce SUDI risks.

Always use a safe sleep space that is designed for a sleeping baby (eg, a cot).³

Planning ahead for night feeds, unsettled behaviour and social gatherings can prevent any change to unsafe sleeping arrangements – “keep every sleep a safe sleep.”

¹ Scheers, Rutherford, and Kemp 2003.

² Vulnerability is increased if there is exposure to smoking before or after birth, infants are born before 36 weeks gestation, infant birth weight is less than 2500 grams, or there are medical conditions, illness or caregivers are intoxicated with any substance.

³ A safe sleep space is a firm mattress, with baby protected from face covering and entrapment and safe from suffocation under a parent or other child. A fact sheet on cots safety is available from: <http://www.consumeraffairs.govt.nz/productsafety/consumerinfo/cots.html#PDF>