



reduce the risk of cot death

- Place your baby on the back to sleep
- Cut smoking in pregnancy – fathers too!
- Do not let anyone smoke in the same room as your baby
- Do not let your baby get too hot
- Keep your baby's head uncovered – place your baby in the “feet to foot” position
- Do not share a bed with your baby if you have been drinking alcohol, take drugs or if you are a smoker
- If your baby is unwell, seek prompt advice

A N E A S Y G U I D E

place your baby on the back to sleep

Place your baby on the back to sleep from the very beginning. This will reduce the risk of cot death. Side sleeping is not as safe as sleeping on the back. Healthy babies placed on their backs are **not** more likely to choke.





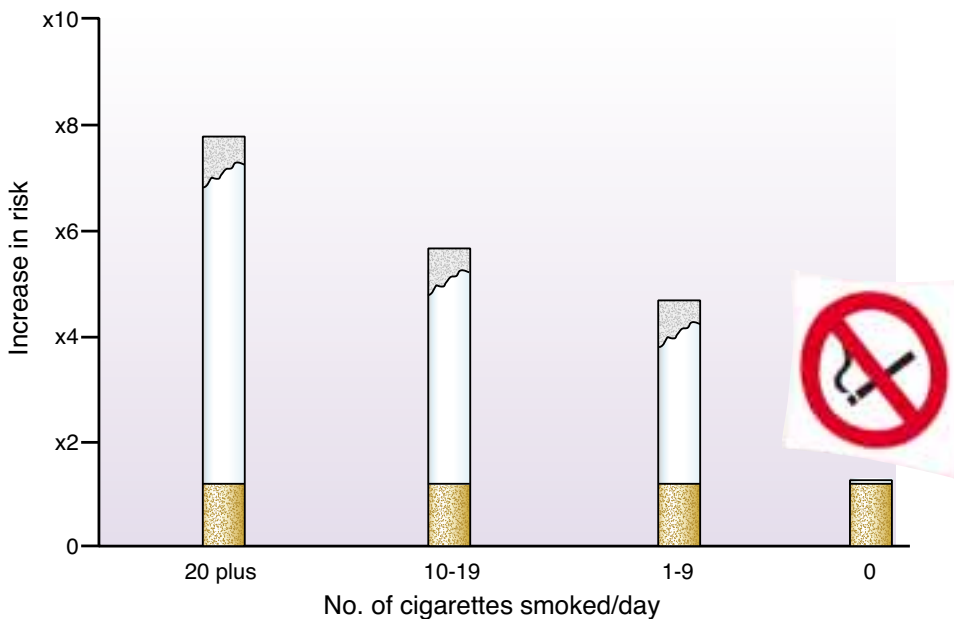
At about five or six months old, it is normal for babies to roll over and they should not be prevented from doing so. This is the age at which the risk of cot death falls rapidly, but still put your baby on the back to sleep. If you find your baby on the front before five or six months old, gently turn your baby over but do not feel you should be checking for this constantly through the night.

Babies enjoy a variety of movements when awake and it is good for them and their development to experience different positions. This should include sometimes lying on their tummies to play during the day, when they are awake.

cut out smoking during pregnancy – fathers too!

**Smoking in pregnancy increases the risk of cot death.
It is best not to smoke at all.**

THE LESS YOU SMOKE, THE LOWER THE RISK



CUT OUT SMOKING DURING PREGNANCY

don't let anyone smoke in the same room as your baby

Babies exposed to cigarette smoke after birth are also at an increased risk of cot death. It is best if nobody smokes in the house, including visitors. Anyone who wishes to smoke should go outside.

Do not take your baby into smoky places.

If you are a smoker, sharing a bed with your baby increases the risk of cot death.

For practical and friendly advice on giving up smoking please call the
NHS Smoking Helpline on
0800 169 0 169.

If you are pregnant and want to give up please call the NHS Pregnancy Smoking Helpline on
0800 169 9 169.



NO SMOKING IN THE SAME ROOM AS YOUR BABY

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

Overheating can increase the risk of cot death. Babies can overheat because of too much bedding or clothing, or because the room is too hot. Remember, a folded blanket counts as two blankets.

When you check your baby, if he or she 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.

It is easier to adjust for the temperature with changes of lightweight blankets.

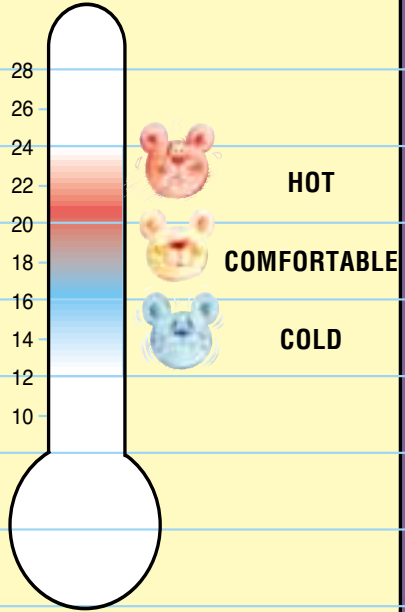
Babies do not need hot rooms, all night heating is rarely necessary. Keep the room at a temperature that is comfortable for you.

About 18°C (65°F) is comfortable.



BEDROOM & NURSERY THERMOMETER

sheet only
1 blanket
2 blankets
3 blankets
4 or more blankets



These guidelines are for babies wearing a nappy, vest and babygro plus a sheet.

- In summer, if it is very warm, your baby may not need any bedclothes other than a sheet.
- Even in winter, most babies who are unwell or feverish need fewer clothes.
- Babies lose excess heat from their heads, so make sure their head cannot be covered with bedclothes.
- Babies should never sleep with a hot water bottle or electric blanket, next to a radiator, heater or fire, or in direct sunshine.
- Remove hats and extra clothing as soon as you come indoors or enter a warm car, bus or train, even if it means waking your baby.

**keep baby's
head uncovered –
place your baby in
the **feet to foot**
position**



PLACE YOUR BABY IN THE



Babies whose heads are covered accidentally with bedding are at an increased risk of cot death.

Sleep your baby on a mattress that is firm, flat, well-fitting and clean. The outside of the mattress should be waterproof, like PVC. Cover the mattress with a single sheet. Use sheets and lightweight blankets but not duvets, quilts, baby nests, wedges, bedding rolls or pillows.

To prevent your baby wriggling down under the covers, place your baby's feet at the foot of the cot or pram. Make the covers up so that they reach no higher than the shoulders. Covers should be securely tucked in so they cannot slip over the baby's head.

The safest place for your baby to sleep is in a cot in your room for the first six months. While it's lovely to have your baby with you for a cuddle or a feed, it's safest to put your baby back in their cot before you go to sleep. There is a link between sharing a bed all night and cot death if you or your partner:

- **are smokers (no matter where or when you smoke)**
- **have recently drunk any alcohol**
- **have taken medication or drugs that make you sleep more heavily**
- **are very tired.**

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

Never sleep with a baby on a sofa or armchair.

if your baby is unwell, seek advice promptly

Babies often have minor illnesses which you do not need to worry about. Make sure your baby drinks plenty of fluids and is not too hot. If your baby sleeps a lot, wake him or her regularly for a drink. It may be difficult to judge whether an illness is more serious requiring prompt medical attention. The following guidelines may help you:

Serious illness

There may be serious illness if your baby has any of the following symptoms:

- has a highpitched or weak cry, is less responsive, is much less active or more floppy than usual
- looks very pale or all over, grunts with each breath, seems to be working hard to breathe when you look at their chest and tummy
- takes less than a third of usual fluids, passes much less urine than usual, vomits green fluid, or passes blood in their stools
- has a high fever or is sweating a lot.

IF YOUR BABY SEEMS UNWELL SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE EARLY AND QUICKLY

URGENT MEDICAL ATTENTION is needed if your baby:

- stops breathing or goes blue
- is unresponsive and shows no awareness of what is going on
- has glazed eyes and does not focus on anything
- cannot be woken
- has a fit. Even if your baby recovers without medical attention, still contact your doctor

DIAL 999 and ask for an ambulance

Normal healthy babies do not need a breathing monitor. Some parents find that using a breathing monitor reassures them. However, there is no evidence that monitors prevent cot death. If you have any worries about your baby, ask your doctor about the best steps to take.

Immunisation reduces the risk of cot death.

Remember that cot death is rare, so please don't let worry about it stop you enjoying your baby's first few months. Research is continuing to help us understand more about cot death, and since 1991 the number of babies dying has reduced by 70% – after parents and carers started following these risk-reduction messages.



SEEK ADVICE PROMPTLY



There is a great deal more
information available about cot death.

For information on babies' room thermometers or
cot death news, please send a large
stamped self-addressed envelope to:

The Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths (FSID)
Cot death research and support

Artillery House

11-19 Artillery Row

London SW1P 1RT

Tel: 0870 787 0885

Helpline 0870 787 0554

Fundraising 0870 443 6814

www.sids.org.uk/fsid/

The information in this leaflet will reduce the risk of cot death,
but it is not guaranteed to prevent it altogether.

If you require further copies of this title quote
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