

Safe Sleep Guidelines



It is important to ensure your newborn baby sleeps in a safe and secure environment.

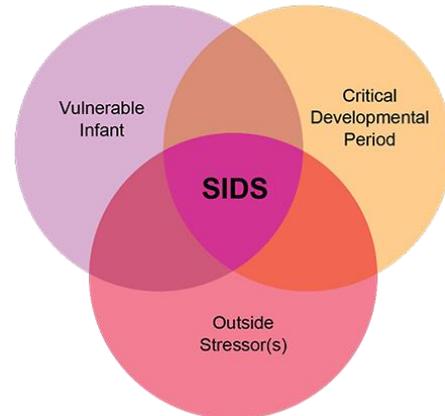
Sadly, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) can occur in a very small number of babies. Although a definitive reason for it happening hasn't yet been found, experts do agree there are strong influencing factors involved when SIDS occurs. Thankfully there are ways as a parent that you can minimise this risk.

This image shows the three factors involved. When all three factors combine the risk of SIDS is at its highest.

The **critical development period** is from birth to six months.

A **vulnerable infant** is one with a dysfunctional and/or immature cardiorespiratory or arousal system. They don't have the same level of protective response to their airway being obstructed or compromised.

An **outside stressor** is something like stomach sleeping, too many/loose blankets, the airway being obstructed by a pillow, duvet or another adult or other things such as smoking near a baby.



It is difficult to know whether your baby is vulnerable or not, but during the critical period of the first 6 months of life, by removing the 'outside stressors' you greatly reduce the risk of SIDS for your baby. This is completely within your control!

Remember the following:

- Don't let your baby get too hot or cold and keep your baby's head uncovered when sleeping. The room temperature should be around 18°C.
- Make sure your baby sleeps in his/her own cot/ Moses basket/ in the parent's bedroom for the first 12 months of life.
- NO bed sharing with parents or siblings and never sleep in a chair with baby in your arms.
- Make sure your baby's sleep area is 'clean', so no toys or unnecessary items within the cot.
- NO cot bumpers, extra blankets or pillows.
- Always put your baby to sleep on his/her back. Ensure that babies are placed 'feet to base' of their cot.
- Loveys/comforters – do not give one to a newborn, but after a few months if you want to give this to your baby then ensure it is no larger than the size of a handkerchief.
- Don't smoke during pregnancy or breastfeeding and don't let anyone smoke in the same room as your baby.
- Try to breastfeed your baby if possible.