

## Keeping baby safe in bed: 6 to 12 months

Every year too many New Zealand babies die suddenly during sleep. Many of these deaths can be prevented.



Help to keep your baby safe in bed by:

- making sure that your baby is in their own bed for every sleep
- making sure that your baby is on their back for every sleep
- having a **smokefree** ([/your-health/pregnancy-and-kids/first-year/helpful-advice-during-first-year/have-smokefree-home-and-car](http://your-health/pregnancy-and-kids/first-year/helpful-advice-during-first-year/have-smokefree-home-and-car)) home and car
- **breastfeeding** ([/your-health/pregnancy-and-kids/first-year/helpful-advice-during-first-year/breastfeeding-perfect-you-and-your-baby](http://your-health/pregnancy-and-kids/first-year/helpful-advice-during-first-year/breastfeeding-perfect-you-and-your-baby)) your baby
- **immunising** ([/your-health/pregnancy-and-kids/services-and-support-you-and-your-child/immunise-your-child](http://your-health/pregnancy-and-kids/services-and-support-you-and-your-child/immunise-your-child)) your baby on time.

# Make every sleep a safe sleep

Sudden unexpected death is a risk to babies until they are about 12 months old, but most deaths can be prevented. There are things that we can do to protect our babies. Although for some babies the cause of death is never found, most deaths happen when the babies are sleeping in an unsafe way.

Always follow these safe-sleep routines.

## Make sure that your baby is safe

To keep your baby safe while sleeping, make sure:

- they always sleep on their back to keep their airways clear
- they are in their own cot or other baby bed
- they are put back in their own bed after feeding – don't fall asleep with them (to protect your back, feed your baby in a chair rather than in your bed)
- they have someone looking after them who is alert to their needs and free from alcohol or drugs
- they have clothing and bedding that keeps them at a comfortable temperature – one more layer of clothing than you would wear is enough; too many layers can make your baby hot and upset them
- they are in a room where the temperature is kept at 20°C.

You can check that your baby is warm but not too hot by feeling the back of their neck or their tummy (under the clothes). Baby should feel warm, but not hot or cold. Your baby will be comfortable when their hands and feet are a bit colder than their body.

If you are out somewhere, or if you are sleeping with your baby, make sure that they have their own safe place to sleep. It is never safe to put your baby to sleep in an adult bed, on a couch or a chair or in their car seat.

## Make sure that your baby's bed is safe

Baby's bed is safe when:

- it has a firm and flat mattress
- there are no gaps between the bed frame and the mattress
- there is nothing in the bed that might cover your baby's face, lift their head or choke them.

Your baby may begin to roll over from their back to their front when they get to 5–6 months old. You don't need to try to stop this happening, as long as their cot is free of things that might suffocate them, such as pillows, large soft toys and cot bumpers.

Make sure that your baby's cot is put together correctly. The tops on the corner posts of wooden cots may need to be sawn off so that your baby can't hang themselves by their clothing. The spaces between the bars of the cot must be between 50 mm and 95 mm – try to make the spaces closer to 50 mm if you can. If you have a cot with adjustable levels, make sure that you lower it before your baby can pull themselves up (at about 9–10 months).

The cords for blinds and curtains are a danger. Put the cot away from the window so that your baby can't reach them.

Car seats protect your baby when travelling in the car. Don't use them as a baby bed.

If you don't have a baby bed, talk your nurse. If you are on a low income, you may be able to receive a Special Needs Grant from Work and Income to buy a bed. See the [Work and Income website](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/) (<http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/>) or call 0800 559 009.

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## Related websites

### **Keep your baby safe during sleep – HealthEd (Health Promotion Agency and Ministry of Health)**

(<https://www.healthed.govt.nz/resource/keep-your-baby-safe-during-sleep>)

A pamphlet with key messages about making every sleep a safe sleep to prevent babies dying suddenly in their sleep.

### **PEPE: safe sleep videos – Northland District Health Board and Whakawhetu**

(<http://www.northlanddhb.org.nz/AboutUs/SUDIpreventionhealtheducation.aspx>)

Four online videos showing the safe sleep PEPE messages – Place, Eliminate, Position, Encourage.

### **Whakawhetu** (<http://www.whakawhetu.co.nz/>)

A national kaupapa Māori organisation dedicated to protecting our mokopuna and keeping them safe while they sleep.

### **Safe sleep for baby – Tapuaki: Pacific pregnancy and parenting education** (<http://www.tapuaki.org.nz/im-parent/safe-sleep-baby>)

About keeping baby safe while they are asleep. Includes two online videos: PEPE – place baby in his or her own baby bed, and Taha – Safe sleep for baby.

**Safe sleep checklist – Kidshealth** (<http://www.kidshealth.org.nz/safe-sleep-checklist>)

A safe sleep checklist for parents.

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