



Safer sleep advice for emergency situations

A guide for parents and carers



Shared
Health
Foundation.

Who is The Lullaby Trust?

The Lullaby Trust is dedicated to keeping babies safe and grieving families supported. Our mission is to stop babies dying unexpectedly from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS, also known as cot death), accident or illness.

What is SIDS?

Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden and unexpected death of a baby for no obvious reason. Although we don't yet know how to completely prevent SIDS, you can significantly lower the chances of it happening by following safer sleep advice.



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Fleeing from conflict or crisis often means that sleeping conditions will be unpredictable. It may not always be possible to access a recommended sleeping space for a baby, so we've adapted our safer sleep advice based on different sleeping situations. While those in crisis may not have the facilities to follow all of this advice, we hope that this information provides helpful guidelines. All babies should have as safe a sleeping space as possible.

The importance of routine in reducing the risk of SIDS

It can be difficult to follow the same routine when your living arrangements keep changing. But it is really important to keep the same sleeping routine for your baby, and keep putting them to sleep on their back for every sleep (day and night).

The ABCs of safer sleep

- A** Always sleep your baby
- B** on their **back**
- C** in a **clear** cot or sleep space.

Babies who normally sleep on their back but sometimes sleep on their front are at a greater risk of SIDS.



You have a cot or Moses basket

If you have access to a cot, crib, travel cot or Moses basket, this is ideal.

Babies need just a few basic items for sleep: a firm, flat surface and some well-fitted bedding. We recommend keeping babies sleep space clear.

A clear sleep space means:

-  **No pillows or duvets**
-  **No cot bumpers**
-  **No soft toys**
-  **No loose bedding**
-  **No pods or nests**
-  **No products that will keep your baby in one sleeping position (such as wedges or straps)**



Travel cot mattresses are a lot thinner than a conventional cot mattress. Don't be tempted to place folded blankets or a quilt under the baby to make them 'more comfortable' as babies need a firm, flat mattress. Avoid loose bedding - babies are at higher risk of SIDS if they have their heads covered with loose bedding.

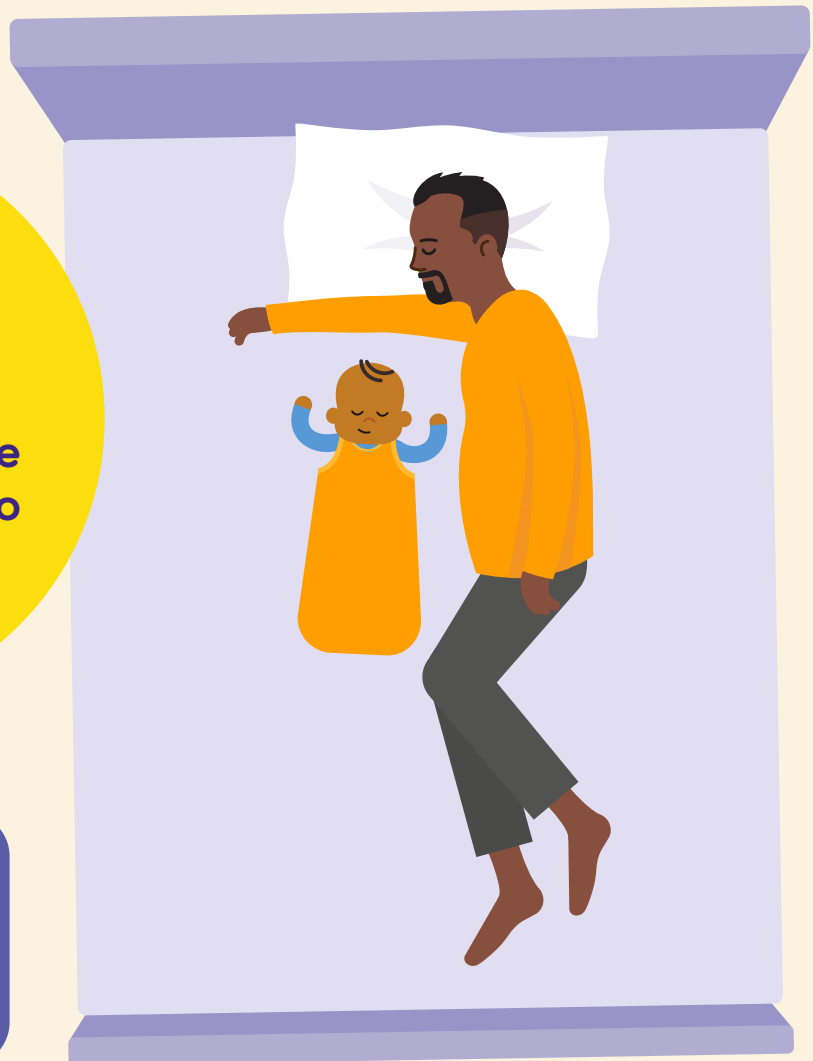
Place your baby on their back in the feet to foot position (placing baby's feet to the bottom end of the cot or Moses basket to avoid them wriggling down under the covers). Use a thin blanket no higher than their shoulders, and firmly tucked in under the mattress.

Bedsharing

The safest place for your baby to sleep is in their own cot or Moses basket. If you do not have a cot or Moses basket, then you should try and find another type of firm, flat, safe sleep surface for your baby.

Bedsharing means that baby shares the same bed with an adult for most of the night, and not just to be comforted or fed

You should follow all of our safer sleep advice for every sleep if you can.



For safer bedsharing:

- Keep pillows and adult bedding away from your baby or any other items that could cover their head or cause them to overheat. A high proportion of babies who die as a result of SIDS are found with their head covered by loose bedding.
- Sleep baby on their back.
- Don't bring other children or pets into bed with you.
- Check that your baby cannot be trapped in the bedframe or headboard, wedged, fall out of bed or get trapped between the mattress and the wall.

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It's really important to know it's **not safe** to bedshare if:



- You or anyone in the bed smokes or your baby was exposed to smoking in pregnancy.'
- You or anyone in the bed has recently drunk any alcohol.
- You or anyone in the bed has taken any drugs or medication that makes you feel sleepy.
- Your baby was born prematurely (before 37 weeks of pregnancy) or weighed under 2.5kg or 5.5 pounds when they were born.
- Never sleep on a sofa or armchair with your baby.

If any of the above points apply, make sure your baby has a separate sleeping space



Other options

If you don't have a cot or Moses basket, we would advise using a safe, firm, flat space for your baby. The following advice gives examples you could consider.

If you have a pram or a pushchair

- Ensure the base of the pram or pushchair is flat and not sloping.
- Keep the hood down when indoors.
- Don't cover the pram or pushchair. For example, don't put material or a blanket over the top to keep out light.
- The padded sides of a pram or pushchair may trap more heat, so keep checking the baby's temperature by feeling the back of their neck or chest. If their skin feels sweaty or clammy, they are too hot. Remove a layer of bedding or what they are wearing.
- We advise against letting babies sleep in a seated or inclined position. If there are no other options, babies need to be in the lie-flat position when sleeping. This needs to be completely flat, not just in a recline position.
- Don't let baby sleep unsupervised in a pushchair seat. Straps are important to keep baby safe in the pushchair, but are not tested for unsupervised sleep.

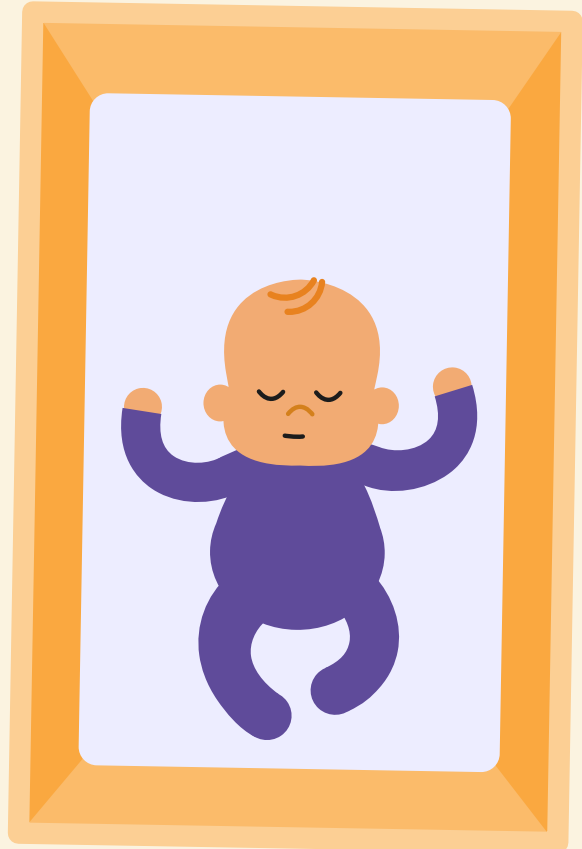


Baby boxes

If you have access to a baby box to sleep your baby, we advise the following:

- Do not lift or carry the box if your baby is in it.
- Do not put the lid on the box if your baby is in it.
- Always keep the box clear as a sleeping space.
- Do not place additional bedding on top of or underneath the mattress to raise your baby up to a higher level.
- Ensure the box is placed on a solid surface and cannot fall over, preferably on the floor if it is clean and dry.
- Do not use the box if it gets wet or soiled.
- Ensure that pets stay away from the box.

Baby boxes are cardboard boxes specifically designed for babies to sleep in



Car seats

Babies should not be left to sleep unsupervised in a car seat. This is particularly important for premature or young babies. Car seats are designed to keep babies safe while travelling, **not as a main sleeping place.** They should be taken out as soon as you get to your destination, destination and, where possible, placed onto a firm, flat surface to sleep.

Temperature

If the weather in the UK is different to the temperatures you and your baby are used to, this information is particularly important.

Make sure that your baby is a comfortable temperature – not too hot or too cold. Babies don't need hats indoors. Keep your baby's head uncovered while they are sleeping, so they can lose heat from their heads when necessary. Feel your baby's chest or the back of their neck (your baby's hands and feet will usually be cooler, which is normal). If your baby's skin is hot or sweaty, remove one or more layers of clothing or bedding.



It may not be possible for you to control the room temperature, but 16 - 20°C with light bedding or a lightweight, well-fitting baby sleep bag, is a comfortable room temperature for sleeping babies.



Baby banks

If you need baby items, you can get help from a baby bank. **A baby bank is like a food bank but for baby essentials and are for families who need help.** They provide pre-owned items for newborns to five-year-olds donated from the local community. These products include sleeping products such as cots, travel cots and Moses baskets.

If you are in contact with any professionals ask them to refer you to a baby bank. You can also contact your local baby bank directly and you may be able to self-refer.



This must be a very distressing, unsettling time for you and your baby. If you have any concerns about the sleeping products provided (or not provided), please speak to your accommodation provider or support worker. We also encourage you to speak to your midwife or health visitor as they will be able to give you specialist advice.

Health visitors are specialist midwives or nurses who have additional training in community public health nursing. They work with all families 0-5 years.



You are not alone and there are organisations out there who can support you during this time:

Baby Bank Alliance - babybankalliance.org

Baby banks are like a food bank, but for clothes, toys and equipment for babies and young children. Search their website to find a baby bank near you.

Happy Baby Community - happybabycommunity.org.uk

Community of support for women who have fled from violence or traffickers, and are pregnant or with a young child.

New Roots - refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-support/services

Mental health support services for people with refugee status.

Trussell Trust - trusselltrust.org

A network of over 1,200 food bank centres to provide emergency food and compassionate, practical support to people in crisis.

Best Beginnings - bestbeginnings.org.uk

Support for all parents, co-parents and care-givers to give their children the best beginning in life.

Shelter - shelter.org.uk

Housing advice, information and advocacy for people in need.

UK UNHCR - unhcr.org

Global organisation safeguarding the rights and well-being of people who have been forced to flee violence and persecution.



**Shared
Health
Foundation.**

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We're here to help

**If you have any questions or concerns
about safer sleep, please do not hesitate
to contact The Lullaby Trust on
0808 802 6869 or info@lullabytrust.org.uk**

**You can also follow us on social media
where you can message us with any
questions you have [@lullabytrust](https://twitter.com/lullabytrust)**



**For every baby.
For every family.
Forever.**

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