

Product guide

A guide to buying safer
sleep essentials

the
lullaby
trust



Guidance on baby products

Choosing what items your baby might need can be overwhelming. To help, we have put together a guide on how to choose the products or items your baby needs to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). We also cover the types of products to avoid, and what claims to look out for.

The number of baby sleeping products available can be confusing, so sticking to this simple guideline can help parents make an informed choice.

The safest place for a baby to sleep is in their own clear, flat, separate sleep space, such as a cot or Moses basket.

Things don't have to be complicated. We're here to help.



You don't need much for safer sleep

A few essentials that you need:

- Cot or Moses basket
- Portable sleep space
- Mattress
- Baby sleeping bag or sheets and a blanket
- Room thermometer
- Car seat



Things to check

Does the item comply with British Safety Standards? If so it should say on the product itself, the packaging, instructions or website.

If the item is something your baby will sleep on, like a mattress, it should:


- **Be firm: Baby's head should not sink in by more than a few millimetres.**
- **Be entirely flat with no raised or cushioned areas.**
- **Have a fitted waterproof cover.**

The logo for the British Standards Institution (BSI), consisting of the lowercase letters 'bsi.' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A small red dot is positioned at the end of the period. To the right of the logo is a green circular icon containing a white checkmark.

Items we would **not** recommend:

- **Soft-sided pods/nests**
- **Pillows/duvets/thick heavy bedding**
- **Cot bumpers**
- **Hammocks**
- **Sleep positioners**

Things to check

A circular orange icon containing a white exclamation mark, indicating a warning or important note.

Many products make claims about the benefits to your baby, and it can be hard to sort the science from the sales tactics. We can help you with what to look for and what to ignore.

Claims you should ignore

1

Anything that claims to help baby sleep longer or more deeply

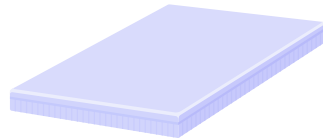


For tired parents, any product claiming to help your baby sleep for longer might sound like a fantastic idea. However, it is usual for babies under one (or sometimes even older) to wake during the night.

Encouraging babies to sleep for longer and more deeply than is usual for their stage of development isn't advised. It may affect their ability to wake up if something is wrong, such as if their mouth and nose becomes covered. This inability to wake easily from sleep is thought to be linked to SIDS.

2

'Breathability' and temperature regulation



If a baby gets too hot this can increase their risk of SIDS.

Some products or companies claim that a product can help to control the temperature of the baby. Or they may say it is 'breathable'.

But the best way to ensure your baby does not get too hot is to place them to sleep on a firm, flat surface, on their back.

Rather than being breathable it is more important that the mattress is waterproof, or has a fitted waterproof cover or layer. This helps to stop bacteria building up inside the mattress. This reduces the risk of infection, which may increase the risk of SIDS.

3 'Safe or safer' for baby

There are no rules or regulations that look specifically at whether a product decreases or increases the risk of SIDS. Most safety standards checks cover other issues such as the construction of the item, chemicals or fire safety.

Pick products that allow you to follow safer sleep advice to reduce the risk of SIDS. Such as baby sleeping bags, which stop babies from wriggling under bedding.

When checking whether a product is suitable for a baby to sleep on, remember the simple rule: firm, flat and waterproof.

4 'Reduces the risk of flat-head syndrome' (plagiocephaly)

A baby's head is soft and can naturally become flattened, which can worry some parents. A product should not be needed to prevent or reduce this, but if you are worried you should

Speak to your doctor or health visitor. If a product is soft enough to reduce flat-head syndrome, it is soft enough to cause a baby to overheat, increasing the risk of SIDS. Anything soft in a cot can also increase the risk of suffocation.

Allow your baby plenty of supervised tummy time when awake to help avoid or lessen the effect of flat-head syndrome, without increasing the risk of SIDS.

5 **'Reduces risk of SIDS' or 'Reduces environmental factors associated with SIDS'**

Claims that a product will decrease the risk of SIDS are almost always not true. It depends on what the product is being compared to. We would advise parents to be cautious about any product that says it will reduce the risk of SIDS. However, any product that conforms to safer sleep advice (such as the recommended items that follow) will be less risky than one that does not.

For safer sleep you don't need to buy lots of products or spend more on expensive items.

The essentials that you need:



Cot and mattress

It is important that the mattress is firm, entirely flat, and waterproof. It should have no soft or cushioned areas, particularly around baby's head.

Soft mattresses are known to increase the risk of SIDS. They make it harder for babies to lose body heat, which can cause them to become too hot.

The surface of the mattress should be firm enough that when your baby is placed on it, their head does not sink in more than a few millimetres.

Three key questions you could ask are:

1. Is it firm?

2. Is it flat?

3. Does it have a

waterproof layer?

If you choose a second-hand mattress, make sure it has been stored somewhere clean, dry and smoke-free.



Portable sleep space

(Moses basket/ travel cot/ carry cot)

We advise that your baby is in the same room as you when they sleep – day and night. If you choose a Moses basket or travel cot, follow the mattress advice on page seven, and don't add extra padding.



A blanket, baby sleeping bag or sheets

Baby sleeping bags are a good option as they prevent your baby's head from being covered by wriggling under bedding. You can choose different togs for different seasons to help keep your baby at the right temperature. You can also select different sizes depending on the age of your baby.



It's important that the baby sleeping bag fits well around the shoulders so that your baby's head does not slip down into the bag. No extra bedding is needed.

Blankets are suitable as an alternative, as long as they aren't too thick or doubled over, so there is less risk of overheating. If using blankets, make sure they are firmly tucked in and come up no higher than the shoulders.

Sleep your baby in the feet to foot position (baby's feet against the foot of the cot) to avoid their face becoming covered by loose bedding.

Room thermometer

Any room a baby sleeps in should be between 16 – 20°C. A room thermometer can help to avoid your baby getting too hot or cold.



Pram

Babies are safest sleeping flat and on their backs. Like all places where your baby may sleep, make sure the mattress is firm, flat and waterproof.



We advise against sleeping babies in a seated or inclined position, such as in pushchairs or buggies. But if there are no other options, babies need to be in a completely lie-flat position when sleeping (not just a reclined position).

Car seat

Car seats are essential for safety when travelling, but babies should not sleep in a car seat for long periods. They aren't designed to be a main sleeping place.



On longer journeys, give your baby regular breaks. If possible, have an adult sit with the baby in the back of the car, or use a mirror so you are able to keep an eye on them.

Products we'd advise you not to buy:

Soft-sided pods or nests

Pods or nests are a softer type of sleep surface sometimes used instead of or in addition to a mattress, with areas that are raised or cushioned. When sleeping, babies shouldn't lie on or have anything soft around them, particularly their heads. This can cause them to overheat and increases the risk of SIDS.

Soft, squishy materials can also cover baby's mouth and nose if they are pressed against it.

It's important to remember that while there is a British Safety Standard for cot mattresses, there is no standard for pods or nests as a sleeping place for babies.



Pillows, duvets and thick heavy bedding

Duvets, cot quilts and pillows have been shown to increase the risk of SIDS and are not recommended for babies under one year.



Weighted swaddles, weighted blankets and weighted sleeping bags are also not recommended for babies under one year. This is due to the risk of overheating and head covering.



Cot bumpers

Cot bumpers pose a serious risk to babies. Accidents have been caused by babies becoming entangled in the ties or material, or pulling themselves up on the bumpers. Your baby's cot should be kept clear to be as safe as possible.

The cot should meet the British Safety Standard in terms of shape, build, and spacing of the bars. This helps to lower the risk of a baby injuring themselves.



Hammocks

Hammocks are not a firm, flat surface for babies to sleep on. We know firm and flat is safest for babies, because it reduces the risk of SIDS.



Sleep positioners

Babies should not be slept on any surface that straps or holds them in one position, whether on their back, front or side.

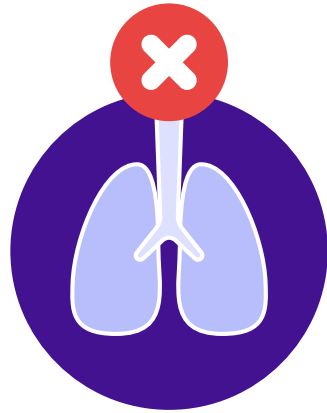
Some products are sold that claim to help babies relax by holding them in position on their tummy. However, it is very risky if babies fall asleep on their tummies, so we strongly recommend you do not use any item that does this.



Products that can restrict

baby's breathing tube (airway)

There are a lot of products available for babies to sit in and sleep in. Some might not provide the safest position for your baby's breathing (airway). If your baby falls asleep in a product similar to the ones listed below, move your baby onto a firm, flat, clear space, such as a cot or Moses basket.



We advise against letting babies sleep in anything that keeps them in a seated or inclined position such as a:

- Bouncy chair
- Baby hammock
- Baby swing
- Baby beanbag
- Sleep positioner



For more information on how to keep your baby's airway open and clear whilst they sleep visit: [How to keep a sleeping baby's breathing tube \(airway\) open - The Lullaby Trust](#)

Second-hand baby products



Using second-hand baby products is a great way to save money and it's better for the environment too. We know lots of families kindly pass on items to friends and family once their baby has outgrown them. However, there are a few things to be aware of before you use something pre-owned:

Instructions

Make sure you get hold of and read the products' instructions before using the product. They can often be downloaded from the manufacturer's website. It's best to avoid videos people have posted on social media about the product, as they may not be accurate or follow the way the manufacturer intended the product to be used.

Standards

Make sure the product meets the relevant British Safety Standards (more information on page 17). Many items on social media marketplaces or sites that sell pre-owned products may not meet these standards. If a product complies with a standard, it should be stated on the product, its packaging or website.



Safety

Search online to ensure the product hasn't been recalled or deemed unsafe to use. You can search 'product recalls' on gov.uk to see if any problems have been identified.

All in one piece

Make sure the product is in good condition with no broken or missing parts. In addition, any second-hand items you use should be smoke and pet free.

Mattresses

Research has suggested an increased risk of SIDS when using a second-hand mattress brought in from outside of the family home, although this is not yet proven. Generally, we would advise it is safest to have a new mattress for each baby. But we know this is not always possible.

To help reduce the risk, we've put a checklist together for you. The second-hand mattress should:

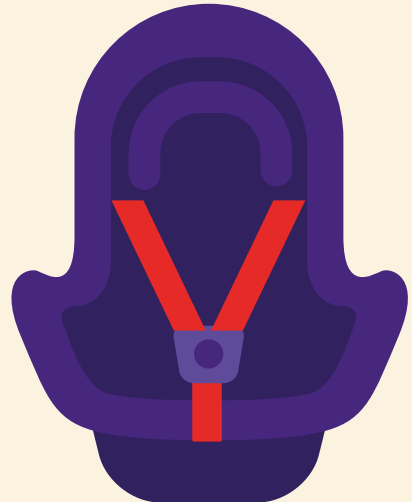


- Have a well-fitting 100% waterproof cover to protect from any accidents and spillages seeping into the core of the mattress.
- Have no rips or tears.
- Be in good condition and doesn't look like it has water damage.
- Still be firm and flat and not sagging in places.
- Fit the cot or Moses basket with no gaps so there is no risk of baby getting trapped.
- Have a fire-resistant label on it.



Car seats

We don't recommend buying or using a second-hand car seat as it might not be obvious or visible if it's been in an accident. Even wear and tear over time can affect the safety of the car seat and its ability to protect your baby.



British Safety Standards

The logo for British Standards Institution (BSI), consisting of the lowercase letters 'bsi.' in a bold, sans-serif font, with a small red dot above the period. The logo is positioned in the top right corner of the page, partially overlapping a light purple circular graphic.

We strongly advise that any product you choose complies with British Safety Standards, especially if you are buying an item over the internet. A British Standard tells us that the product has passed certain tests, such as making sure it will not fall apart or set on fire easily. But it doesn't mean that it will be safe when it comes to reducing the risk of SIDS. If a product complies with a standard, it should be stated on the product, its packaging or website.

When a manufacturer creates a sleeping product, they mean for it to be used in a certain way. Using an item in a way the manufacturer did not intend could put your baby at risk. For example, adapting a cot and attaching it to an adult bed.

Do not use products (even a compliant product) that has adaptations or added décor such as gems or fur, as these often pose a risk you are not aware of.

Second-hand products should be smoke and pet free.

Bear in mind that just because a product is made by a name you know or sold by a well-known retailer, it does not mean it is safe for your baby to sleep in or on.

Safety Standards for Baby

Sleep Products



Cots and travel cots - BS EN 716-1:2017

Moses baskets, carry cots - BS EN 1466:2014 or
BS EN 1466:2023

Bedside cribs - Since 2020, all bedside cribs should meet the new crib safety standard BS EN 1130:2019. Meaning cots should no longer have a side that fully drops down

Mattresses - BS 7177:2008+A1:2011

Mattresses for cots, travel cots and cribs - BS EN 16890:2017+A1:2021

Car seat - ECE Regulation 44.04 (or R 44.03) or to the new i-size regulation, R129. Look for the 'E' mark label on the seat

Sleepbags - BS EN 16781:2018

Search 'product recalls' on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) to see if any problems have been identified with a potential purchase.



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. Baby banks should provide information about the product but if not, ask the staff.

Baby Bank Alliance – babybankalliance.org – Search their website to find a baby bank near you.



**More information on
sleeping products**



You can sign up for NHS-approved advice straight to your phone on pregnancy, birth and beyond. Visit: www.nhs.uk/start4life or speak to your health visitor, practice nurse or midwife.

The Lullaby Trust receives financial support from a small number of baby product manufacturers. Our relationships with them do not in any way influence our safer sleep advice, which is informed by scientific research. We only associate with companies that are committed to safety and produce products that align with our safer sleep guidelines. Funding from companies helps us to provide free safer sleep advice and support bereaved parents.

To read the research and evidence behind this guide go to www.lullabytrust.org.uk/research/evidence-base



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

**More baby safety information can be found at: lullabytrust.org.uk
T: 020 7802 3200**