



Reducing the risk of sudden infant death

Bexley Safeguarding Children Board has prepared this briefing for the children's workforce to assist everyone who comes in contact with parents and carers to pass on key public health advice in relation to safe sleeping for infants.

Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) – sometimes known as 'cot death' – is the sudden, unexpected and unexplained death of an apparently healthy baby.

Most deaths happen during the first six months of a baby's life. Although the cause of SIDS isn't fully understood, there are a number of things parents and carers can do to reduce the risk which the Board encourages you to pass on:

Do:

- * Keep your baby smoke free during pregnancy and after birth
- Always place baby on their back to sleep.
- Place baby in the "feet to foot" position (with their feet touching the end of the cot, Moses basket or pram).
- Keep baby's head uncovered. Their blanket should be tucked in no higher than their shoulders.
- Let baby sleep in a cot or Moses basket in the same room as the parent for the first six months.
- Use a mattress that's firm, flat, waterproof and in good condition.
- Breastfeed baby if possible.

Don't:

- Smoke during pregnancy or let anyone smoke in the same room as a baby (both before and after birth).
- Sleep on a bed, sofa or armchair with a baby.
- Share a bed with a baby if either parent smoke or take drugs, or if a parent has been drinking alcohol.
- Let a baby get too hot or too cold. A room temperature of 16-20C, with light bedding or a lightweight baby sleeping bag, will provide a comfortable sleeping environment for a baby. The baby should not feel sweaty or hot to the touch.