

# Maternal and Child Health Service: Safe Sleeping Checklist



**Please Check:**



**Close match to statement**



**Does not match**



**Not applicable**

- Baby is placed on their back to sleep with head and face uncovered (no bonnet, no hat, no hooded clothing).
- Cot is made up with baby's feet positioned at the bottom of the cot.
- No loose bedding, quilts, doonas, pillows, cot bumpers, sheepskins, soft toys or nests/cocoons in the cot.
- Cot (new or second hand) meets the mandatory Australian Safety Standard (AS/NZS 2172:2003).
- Portable cot complies with the mandatory Australian Safety Standard (AS/NZS 2195:2010).
- Locking pin is firmly in place in bassinets/cots that rock whenever baby is unsupervised.
- Mattress is firm, clean, well fitted and flat (not elevated or tilted), with no more than 20mm gap between mattress and cot sides and ends when centred.
- Plastic packaging is removed from the mattress before use.
- Cords hanging from blinds, curtains, electrical appliances need to be appropriately secured and well out of reach of a child inside the cot.
- Heaters or electrical appliances are well away from the cot to avoid the risk of overheating. No electric blankets, hot water bottles or wheat bags.

**Note:** Two new infant sleep product mandatory standards come into effect on 19 January 2026. The new standards aim to further reduce the risk of death and injury from products in which babies are intended to or may fall asleep. There is a transition period for businesses to prepare to meet the new requirements. Products purchased prior to 19 January 2026 may not comply with these standards: <https://www.productsafety.gov.au/business/search-mandatory-standards/infant-sleep-products-mandatory-standards>

## Always place baby on their back to sleep

Placing baby on their back to sleep helps keep their airway clear and ensures their protective reflexes work. Back sleeping reduces the risk of suffocation, overheating and choking.

The chance of babies dying suddenly and unexpectedly is greater if they sleep on their tummies or side.

Tummy time is safe and important for babies that are awake and under adult supervision.

Scan the QR codes below for more information from Red Nose:



Back sleeping



Tummy time



Starting to roll

## Sleep baby with head and face uncovered

Babies control their temperature through their face and head, so keeping baby's face and head uncovered during sleep helps reduce the risk of overheating. It also helps keep their airways clear which reduces the risk of suffocation. This includes removing hats and bonnets.

## Keep baby smoke free before and after birth

Smoking during pregnancy and around baby once they are born increases the risk of sudden infant death – this includes second-hand smoke. If you or your partner smoke, don't smoke around baby and never smoke where baby sleeps.

Vapes contain some of the same harmful chemicals as cigarettes. This includes nicotine, which is often still included in vapes that are labelled nicotine free. Shisha (water pipes) also contain tobacco and nicotine.

It is recommended that your baby is not exposed to smoke or vapour. Scan the QR codes below for more info:



Second and third hand smoke and vapour



Shisha smoking factsheet

## Breastfed babies

Breastfeeding has been shown to reduce the risk of sudden infant death. Breastfeeding is not always possible, so parents and carers using formula to feed their baby can follow the other evidence-based recommendations for safer sleep.

This document has been produced in conjunction with Red Nose. For any safe sleep inquiries, please contact Red Nose's Safe Sleep Support Line at 1300 998 698, available between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday (AEST), or email your questions to [education@rednose.org.au](mailto:education@rednose.org.au)

## Safe sleeping environment, night and day

The safest place for baby to sleep is in their own safe space, with a safe mattress, and safe bedding. Baby should always be placed on their back to sleep, with their feet at the bottom of the bassinet or cot.

**Safe cot** – Meets Australian standard AS/NZS 2172:2003.

**Safe mattress** – Firm, flat, right size for your safe cot, meets voluntary Australian standard (AS/NZS 8811.1:2013).

**Safe bedding** – Lightweight bedding in natural fibres, firmly tucked in on all three sides and only pulled up to the chest.

**Safe sleeping bag** – Well fitted across the neck and armholes with baby's arms out, and no hood.

**Safe sleeping space** – Sleep baby in their own safe sleep space in the same room as their parent or caregiver for at least the first 6 months.

## Co-sleeping

The safest place for a baby is in their own safe sleep space. If you choose to co-sleep with your baby, it is important to know how to make this as safe as possible.

Scan the QR code for more information:



Red Nose Co-Sleeping Guide for Parents

## Unsafe sleep surfaces

These are soft, curved, inclined, uneven or unstable. They include:

- sheepskin or lamb's wool underlays
- couches, with or without someone else
- makeshift bedding, pillows, beanbags and waterbeds
- prams
- slings, swings and bouncers
- child car seats.

Child car seats protect your baby from injury in car crashes, but sleeping on an incline can make it harder for your baby to breathe easily. It's best to check your baby's breathing and take regular breaks during long drives.

## Other carers

Make sure that everyone who cares for baby (such as family, friends and babysitters) understand the safe sleep recommendations and can provide a safe sleep space.

## Fire safety

Ensure there is a working smoke alarm that is less than 10 years old in the room(s) where baby sleeps. A fire is **four times more likely to be fatal** without a working smoke alarm.