

How to Reduce the Risk of Cot Death



Cot death, also known as Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), is the sudden and unexpected death of an infant. Cot death is a very rare event. Although it is not known exactly what causes cot death, there are several steps that can be taken to reduce the risk.

1. Place your baby on their 'back to sleep', not on their front or side. Grandparents and other caregivers should be told to always place the baby to sleep on the back. When awake your baby should spend time on the tummy ('tummy to play') to prevent flat spots on the head.
2. For the first six months, the safest place for your baby to sleep is in a cot in your bedroom.
3. A cot should have a firm mattress covered with a cotton sheet; do not place soft bedding under the baby.
4. Do not let your baby get too hot. The infant could be too hot if you notice sweating, damp hair, flushed cheeks or a heat rash. Dress the baby lightly for sleep. Set the room temperature in a range that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult. Do not use duvets, quilts or thick blankets.
5. Do not use a cap and keep your baby's head uncovered. Place the feet touching the foot of the cot to prevent the baby wriggling down under the covers. The cot should be uncluttered with soft-toys, comforters, pillows and other objects.
6. Never smoke around your baby. Do not let anyone smoke in the same room as your baby.

In summary, place the baby to sleep on the back, in the parents' room, in the baby's uncluttered cot, on a firm mattress, in a comfortable temperature and a smoke free environment.