



**Staffordshire and  
Stoke-on-Trent**  
Integrated Care System



# Safe sleep for your baby

**Safer sleep advice for parents  
and carers in Stoke-on-Trent  
and Staffordshire.**



This advice is based on scientific evidence to give you peace of mind to enjoy this special time with your baby.

# Sleeping safely

**“For the first six months of your baby’s life the safest place for them to sleep is in a cot in the same room as the person looking after them, for all sleeps.**

“Sadly, every year a small number of babies die suddenly and unexpectedly in their sleep, on average four or five babies a year die unexpectedly in Staffordshire and Stoke-on Trent. Sometimes a cause is found, such as an underlying health condition, but often there’s no obvious reason. You may hear the term sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) which used to be called cot death.

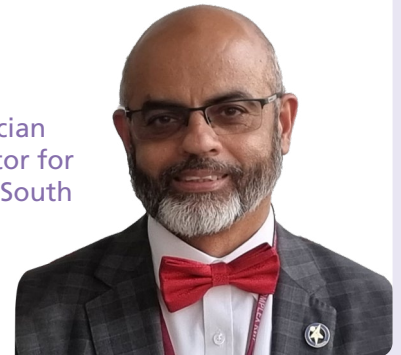
“To reduce the chance of SIDS, you should follow this key advice for baby sleep.

“Remember that sudden infant death is rare, so please don’t let worrying about it stop you enjoying your baby’s first few months. Simple steps can help to keep your baby safe, please follow the advice provided.

“The advice given in this leaflet has helped to save many babies’ lives and should be followed for all sleep periods, not just at night.”

## Dr Mansoor Ahmed

Consultant Paediatrician  
and Designated Doctor for  
Unexpected Deaths (South  
Staffordshire)



## A safe sleeping place for your baby

**You can help your baby get a good sleep and stay as safe as possible by:**

- ☁ the safest place for your baby to sleep is in their own cot, crib or Moses basket in the same room as parents/ carers
- ☁ the mattress should be firm, flat, waterproof, well-fitting and in good condition
- ☁ always place your baby on their back to sleep, never their side or tummy, and gently roll them back if they turn over
- ☁ once your baby is old enough to roll over on their own, they will find their own comfortable position to sleep
- ☁ always putting them feet first at the bottom of the cot so they can’t wriggle down and get caught under the blankets

### Key Fact

Many more babies have died suddenly when placed to sleep on their front or side, rather than on their back. Since the Back to Sleep campaign in 1991, the rate of SIDS has dropped by 80%.

- ☁ removing any bumpers, pillows or soft toys from the cot as these can cause your baby to overheat or affect your baby’s breathing if they’re too close to their face
- ☁ making sure they don’t get too hot or cold - check their temperature by feeling their stomach or the back of their neck, and don’t go by hands and feet as they’ll often feel cold. Babies should not wear hats indoors.

**It’s always important to make sure that any other family or friends who may look after your baby know how to put your baby down for a sleep safely.**

## Do not sleep on a sofa or chair

Never put yourself in a position that you can fall asleep with your baby in an armchair or on the sofa as this increases the risk of SIDS by 50% (Source: The Lullaby Trust).

## Stay smoke free

Babies exposed to cigarette smoke before and after birth are at an increased risk of SIDS. Do not let anyone smoke in the house, including visitors.

Ask anyone who needs to smoke to go outside. Do not take your baby into smoky places.

## Be safe with bed sharing

If you share a bed with your baby (co-sleeping), you should:

- ☁ make sure they sleep on a firm, flat mattress lying on their back
- ☁ not have any pillows or duvets near them
- ☁ not have other children or pets in the bed at the same time.

It's important not to share a bed with your baby if they had a low birthweight (less than 2.5kg or 5.5lb) or if you or your partner:

- ☁ smoke (no matter where or when you smoke and even if you never smoke in bed)
- ☁ have had two or more units of alcohol
- ☁ have taken recreational drugs.

## Breastfeed your baby if possible

Breastfeeding your baby reduces the risk of SIDS. Breast milk gives babies all the nutrients they need for the first six months of life and helps protect them from infection. If you need more help with breastfeeding, talk to your midwife or health visitor. You can also call the National Breastfeeding Helpline on 0300 100 0212 (9.30am to 9.30pm, daily).

### Key Fact

If you smoke, sharing a bed with your baby increases the risk of SIDS.

### Key Fact

SIDS risk is halved in babies who are breastfed for at least two months.



# Helping your baby to sleep

Some babies sleep much more than others. Some sleep for long periods, others in short bursts. It is normal for newborn babies to wake every 2-3 hours to be fed, day and night. Your baby will have their own pattern of waking and sleeping, and it's unlikely to be the same as other babies you know. It's also unlikely to fit in with your need for sleep. Try to sleep when your baby sleeps.

It's a good idea to teach your baby that night-time is different from daytime from the start. During the day, open curtains, play games and don't worry too much about everyday noises when they sleep.

At night, you might find it helpful to keep the lights down low, keep your voice quiet, put your baby down as soon as they've been fed and changed. Try not to change your baby unless they need it. Your baby will gradually learn that night-time is for sleeping.



## Supporting you and your baby

If you're worried about your baby, speak to your health visitor who will be able to offer advice and support. You can contact the health visiting team on:

Staffordshire phone: **0808 178 0611** or text our chat function on: **07520 615722**

Stoke-on-Trent phone: **0300 404 2993** or text our chat function on: **07312 277161**

More information is available at:

 [www.staffsstokeics.org.uk/safe-sleep](http://www.staffsstokeics.org.uk/safe-sleep)

 [www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby)

 [www.lullabytrust.org.uk](http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk)

 [www.ihv.org.uk/families/getting-to-know-your-baby](http://www.ihv.org.uk/families/getting-to-know-your-baby)

 [www.basionline.org.uk/normal-sleep-development](http://www.basionline.org.uk/normal-sleep-development)

 [www.mpft.nhs.uk/services/health-visiting-and-school-nursing/  
your-child-0-5-years](http://www.mpft.nhs.uk/services/health-visiting-and-school-nursing/your-child-0-5-years)