

# Keep Your Baby Safe during Sleep



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**Every year, too many  
New Zealand babies die  
suddenly during sleep.**

**Many of these deaths can  
be prevented.**

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**You can help protect  
your baby from dying  
suddenly in their  
sleep by:**

- 1.** Making sure baby is in their own bed for every sleep (and close to parents/caregivers at night)
- 2.** Making sure baby is on their back for every sleep
- 3.** Keeping baby smokefree from the start
- 4.** Breastfeeding your baby
- 5.** Immunising your baby on time

This pamphlet describes the best ways to protect your baby from dying suddenly in their sleep. It aligns with the Child and Youth Mortality Review Committee publication, *Special Report: Unintentional suffocation, foreign body inhalation and strangulation* (March 2013). This report is available online at [www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-programmes/mrc/cymrc/](http://www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-programmes/mrc/cymrc/)

# Make Every Sleep a Safe Sleep

**Always follow these safe-sleep routines for your baby and your baby's bed.**

## Make sure your baby is safe

- Always sleeps on their back to keep their airways clear
- Is in their own bassinet, cot or other baby bed – free from adults or children who might accidentally suffocate them
- Has a parent/caregiver who is alert to their needs and free from alcohol or drugs

## Make sure your baby's bed is safe

- Has a firm and flat mattress – to keep baby's airways open
- Has no gaps between the frame and the mattress – that could trap or wedge baby
- Has nothing in the bed that might cover baby's face or lift their head – no pillows, toys, loose bedding or bumper pads
- Is close to the parents/caregivers at night for the first 6 months of life



## Make sure your baby is healthy and strong

- **Smokefree** in pregnancy and after birth – protecting their lungs and airways
- **Exclusively breastfed** to around 6 months of age and continues to be breastfed to 12 months of age
- **Immunised** on time

If you choose to sleep in bed with your baby, put them in their own baby bed beside you – for example, a pēpi-pod® or wahakura. This will help reduce the risk of your baby suffocating while they are asleep. Information about using a pēpi-pod® or wahakura is available online at [www.whakawhetu.co.nz](http://www.whakawhetu.co.nz) and [www.pepi-pod.co.nz](http://www.pepi-pod.co.nz)

It is never safe to put your baby to sleep in an adult bed, on a couch or on a chair.

Car seats or capsules protect your baby when travelling in the car. Don't use them as a cot or bassinet.



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If you need financial assistance so that baby can have their own bed, you may be eligible for help from Work and Income. For more information visit [www.workandincome.govt.nz](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz) or call 0800 559 009.

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# Protect your baby's head shape

When your baby is sleeping, turn their head so that sometimes they face left and sometimes they face right.

Tummy time while baby is awake will help protect their head shape and make their arms strong.



- Back for sleep
- Front for play
- Upright for cuddles and hugs

## More information

- Speak to your midwife, Well Child Tamariki Ora nurse, doctor or practice nurse
- Ring PlunketLine on 0800 933 922
- Visit the Ministry of Health website: [www.health.govt.nz](http://www.health.govt.nz)
- Other websites:
  - Whakawhetu National SUDI Prevention for Māori: [www.whakawhetu.co.nz](http://www.whakawhetu.co.nz)
  - TAHA Well Pacific Mother and Infant Service: [www.taha.org.nz](http://www.taha.org.nz)
  - Change for Our Children: [www.changeforourchildren.co.nz](http://www.changeforourchildren.co.nz)



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