

My Baby sleeps safely in a sleeping bag!



In the supine position

In a smoke free environment

In its own bed in the parental bedroom

Breastfed, if possible

Without pillows and stuffed animals in its bed

Without fur and waterproof mat

This guide is orientated on the recommendations of the German Academy for Paediatrics and Youth Medicine and of the Joint Parents' Initiative Sudden Infant Death (GEPS) e.V. and published in the brochure „The ideal sleep environment for your baby“. The guide in its present form has been revised for the State Initiative NRW „Health of Mother and Child“.

Further information:

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Englische Version

Safe Sleep for my Baby

Little children sleep a lot, depending on the age up to 20 hours per day.

Night and Day, at home and on the road.

We developed this brochure, so that your child's sleep will be healthy and safe.



Sleeping on the back, always!

From beginning on, lay your child on the back for sleeping. The supine position has been found to be the safest sleeping position.

Often there is the concern that when lying on the back your child might get vomit more easily into its lungs. However, these are not proven facts. Your child has safety reflexes that work just as well when lying on the back.

A one-sided flattening of the head can be the results of the supine position. To prevent this, lay your child at the head and foot sides of the bed. This will change the position of the head to the light. Carry and feed your child on the right and left arms, so that it will not develop a favourite side. Once a flattening of the head appeared/occurred it usually grows out with time.

Only put your child on the prone position if it is awake and under supervision. In this position the child can develop its motor skills very well.

Smoking: No!

Smoking is a risk factor for many diseases. Not only for the active smoker but also for the child. Not only during pregnancy but also afterwards. Please take care that your child grows up in a smoke-free environment. This is plead is directed at mother, father and anyone else who smokes in the child's surroundings.

Child within reach

In the first year let your child sleep in the parents' bedroom but in its own bed. The sound and movement of its parents stimulate the Baby positively. This does not mean you are spoiling your child, it needs your closeness. For breastfeeding it is also more convenient to have the child's bed next to the parental bed.

Sleeping in a separate room is rather disadvantageous for the safe sleep of your child.



Sleeping bag to prevent coverage

Do not use a blanket, but a sleeping bag, which your child will be wearing. Blankets can slip over the head of your child or your child might sink under them.

Important:

- Pay attention that the size of the sleeping bag fits the body length of the child. Normal newly borns have a size of 50 to 56.
- The cut out for the throat has to be that small that your child's head cannot slip through.
- The arm cut outs should not be too big, otherwise the child will slip down and the throat cut out might press into the Baby's soft throat.
- If the child is cold you should rather dress it warmer, avoid the combination of blanket and sleeping bag.

Space to breathe

The mattress of your child should be pretty hard and permeable to air. Pillows, furs, stuffed animals and a too soft mattress do not belong in the Baby bed. The head of your child might sink into the mattress or pillow (max. sinking depth 1.5 – 2 cm), which could lead to hyperthermia and intake of already used air.

Further, stuffed animals can inhibit the air circulation and cause heat accumulation, if the child's head gets covered by them or sinks into them. Therefore, you should attach the animals at the top of the bed's bars. Your Baby does not necessarily need them whilst sleeping.

Avoid using a waterproof underlay in your baby's cot. It is air-impermeable and can also lead to hyperthermia. Crib canopies, mosquito nets, cloths or loose underlays can be dangerous because your child could pull such materials over it's head or entwine itself in them.

Avoid hyperthermia

Room temperatures between 16 and 18 C are optimal for sleeping. Make sure there is sufficient fresh air in the room (aerate 2-3 times a day for about 10 minutes).

Babies often have cold hands or feet. However, this does not say anything about the room temperature. We would advise you to test the temperature between the shoulder blades: Here the child should be warm but not sweaty. Inside the house your child does not need gloves or a hat.

Breast Feeding

Mother milk is the nourishment for your Baby. Along the well known advantages comes another important factor; your child's sleep becomes safer. Try to breast-feed 6 months complete. From what time onwards your child needs additional food should be discussed with your Pediatrician or Midwife.

Do not give up breastfeeding if you cannot give up smoking. Make sure the environment when breastfeeding is smoke free. This means that at least one hour before the feeding you should not smoke.

The Comforter

Recent studies have shown that comforters make the sleep safer. Take care that the breastfeeding works without any problems before using a comforter. The comforter should not be used to delay or replace a breast feeding meal. In the first place the sucking need of your child should always be satisfied at the motherly breast.

Children who use their comforter for sleeping, should only be given it for sleeping. After its first birthday your child does no longer need the comforter.



Keep the Baby's daily rituals and routines

A child's sleeping need can vary and sleeping through (5 to 6 hours non-stop sleep) usually only settles after a couple of months. Your child needs set daily routines and little change.

Keep the set daily routines and rituals when feeding, nursing and for bedtime. Sometimes external factors keep your child from sleeping. Sometimes internal factors, such as stomachache and rising stomach acid can cause pain. Flatulence can also cause your child to be restless.

If your child sleeps badly, is very restless or does not want to sleep at all, please contact your Pediatrician or midwife. Sedatives are never the solution for such problems!