

## Safe Sleep Conversations

You may be drawn into conversations about a range of topics and practices. Most questions can be answered by referring to safe sleep principles. To check the safety of products and practices:

- Ask ‘How will this product or practice **support** or **undermine** the safety principles of ...’
  - Face-up: *Lying flat, level and on the back*
  - Face clear: *Ensuring the airway stays open and baby can keep breathing*
  - Smokefree: *Building resilience (also breastfed, connected to a GP / WellChild service)*

Issue / Topic	Response
Amber necklaces	Potential suffocation and strangulation risk. Not for use when sleeping
Baby beds	Devices designed as a regular place of sleep for babies e.g. cots, bassinet
Baby carriers	Must ensure a straight spine, held high on the chest, with the face clear
Bedding	Be alert to over-bundling, heavy covers, excessive layers, ‘hot’ materials
Breastfeeding	Protective. For grandparent carers, hold to feed (as if at the breast)
Car seats	Designed for travel and not as a usual place of sleep. Babies can slump
Clothing	Be alert to excessive layers, long and loose ties, poor fit with baby’s size
Comforters	Discourage the use of all soft, loose and unnecessary items in the cot
Co-sleeping	Babies must always sleep, close to carers, but in their own baby bed
Dummies	Dummies are protective, so should not be discouraged
Flat heads	Managed with ‘tummy time’ (‘back for sleep, front for play, upright for cuddles’)
Hats	Not advised for sleeping babies unless the air is extremely cold. Can cover face
Pillows	Dangerous. Can push head forward and / or be a suffocation risk
Port-a-cots	Not recommended as a regular sleeping place for babies
Position	Babies airways are most protected when they sleep on their back
Positioning devices	Not recommended or necessary. Heavy heads are sufficient
Sharing beds	Risks increase when babies share beds, or sleep surfaces, directly with others
Sharing rooms	Getting under covers (and death) are less likely when babies sleep near carers
Sleep association products	Not necessary. Be alert to breathing hazards from soft, or loose items
Sleep bags	Can be an alternative to firmly tucked bedding, for the older baby
Sleep spaces	Portable sleep spaces are emerging to protect babies when not in cots
Smokefree	Protective. Smoking is the main cause of preventable death and disease
Spills	Position of baby’s food tube, their gag and swallow reflexes protect their airway
Swaddling	Firm around the shoulders, loose around the hips and clear of the face
Toys	Keep the cot bare so that airways can stay clear