

Pēpi-pod Briefing

Picture prompts to guide distributors
and whānau



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'More risk' to babies

Siles Brown

Babies are at greater risk of dying as living conditions change in Christchurch, a paediatrician says.

Child and Youth Mortality Review Committee chairman Nick Baker said the risk of infants dying from asphyxiation had increased after last month's quake.

A major concern was exhausted parents falling asleep on children, especially if they were seeking a feeling of security by using the same bed. Makeshift sleeping arrangements on beanbags or mattresses were also dangerous.

Babies could roll over on beanbags and suffocate, or get trapped between mattresses and walls.

Baker said one way of reducing risk was to use a pēpi-pod, a small fabric cot.

A Christchurch organisation, Change for our Children, wants to collect 1000 pēpi-pods to give to city families.

Piperith Tuiloma, 25, who was given a pēpi-pod this week, said she had been sleeping alongside her daughter, Ritesya, since she was born on the day of the quake.

Tuiloma said Ritesya slept well in the pēpi-pod and she could still keep her baby safely by her.

"We need to sleep together with my kids. I'll sleep with them until the earthquakes finish," she said.

Change for our Children

Why we need wahakura and pēpi-pods:
to prevent suffocation deaths of more vulnerable babies

Babies only breathe through their noses in the first months.
They do not breathe through their mouths.



Why position is so important to breathing for babies:
(*Big head, 1/3 behind the baby, short neck, loose jaw, large tongue*).
'Chin to chest' position may narrow or cut off the airway.



So what is the pēpi-pod?

It is a plastic storage box that is transformed into a sleeping space for a baby by the mattress, cover and bedding.



An attractive cover creates appeal and value for users.
The pepi-pod is, therefore, more likely to be used.



The mattress is tight-fitting to ensure there are no gaps to trap a little nose and shut off breathing.





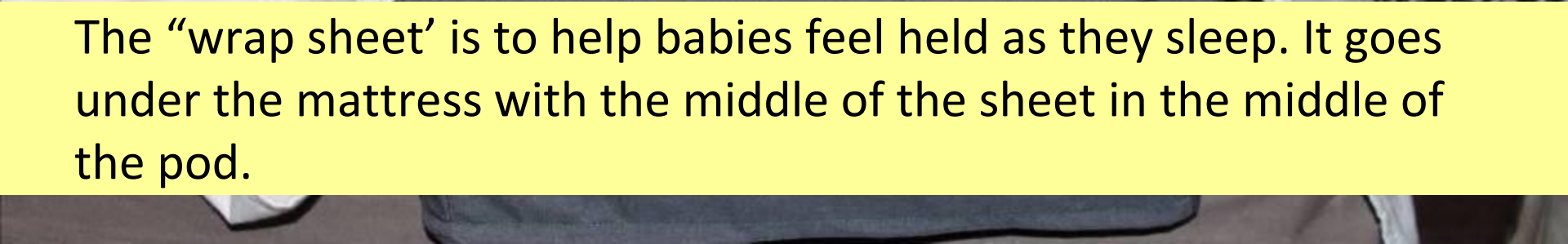
Babies make heat when they sleep. You must 'air' the mattress every day to prevent dampness and mould. When warm air **above** the mattress meets cold air **under** the mattress, water is made.

'Slip-on' bottom sheets are best for babies because they cannot cover a baby's face.



The under blanket is to warm the baby from underneath and protect the mattress.





The “wrap sheet” is to help babies feel held as they sleep. It goes under the mattress with the middle of the sheet in the middle of the pod.



When a pēpi-pod is used in an adult bed take care with **position**.

Place baby at the **top** of the pod, place the pod at the **top** of the bed, and place any adult pillows about **20 cm down** from the top of the bed. Place the pod **flat** on the mattress.

In these ways the adult bedding does not also cover baby.



Place baby's hands where they are **easy for baby to find** so baby can explore the mouth area, suck for comfort, or bring their arms out for cooling as needed.

Wrap sheets can replace the need for swaddling.
Bring the first side of the wrap sheet across the baby taking care to be under the chin and not pressing on it.



Anchor the sheet with your thumb before tucking under the baby to be sure the mattress stays flat and does not roll up.



Tuck the sheet under the baby so that baby lies on it. This creates a firm hold and stops the sheet from coming loose.



Bring the second side across the baby, under the chin and anchor with your thumb, in the same way, before you tuck.





Again, make sure the baby lies on the tucked flap of sheet.



End result for the wrap around sheet.

The sheet, wrapped as shown, is a key part of a baby feeling held and able to settle for sleep. The important startle reflex can still happen against the hold of the sheet.

An unsettled baby is often the reason why parents act in unsafe ways.
This is why settling skills are important to safety.



Light layers of merino drape the baby and protect against covers over the head.

Merino provides **warmth without weight** and supports thermal control and settling. Tuck to be under the weight of the baby. Avoid loose covers and over bundling.



In the first weeks, vary where baby's head rests to help keep a rounded head shape.

(In the night towards the right, in the day the other way.)

To settle, or re-settle, a baby in the lying down position, hold firmly around shoulders and arms. With pressure inwards and not downwards, gently rock and soothe.



You can finish off settling baby in the lying down position, with the pēpi-pod across your knee and gently swaying.





Places where a wahakura, or pēpi-pod, is always needed –
on a couch ...



in or on an adult bed ...



... and on the floor, near walls, in makeshift settings and when away from home.

A photograph of a baby lying in a crib. The baby is positioned in the center of the crib, lying on a white sheet. A large, black and white panda plush toy is placed directly in front of the baby, partially covering their face. The crib's sides are visible, and the background is a plain, light-colored wall. Two large, black 'X' marks are superimposed on the image, one on the left and one on the right, indicating that this setup is unsafe.

X

X

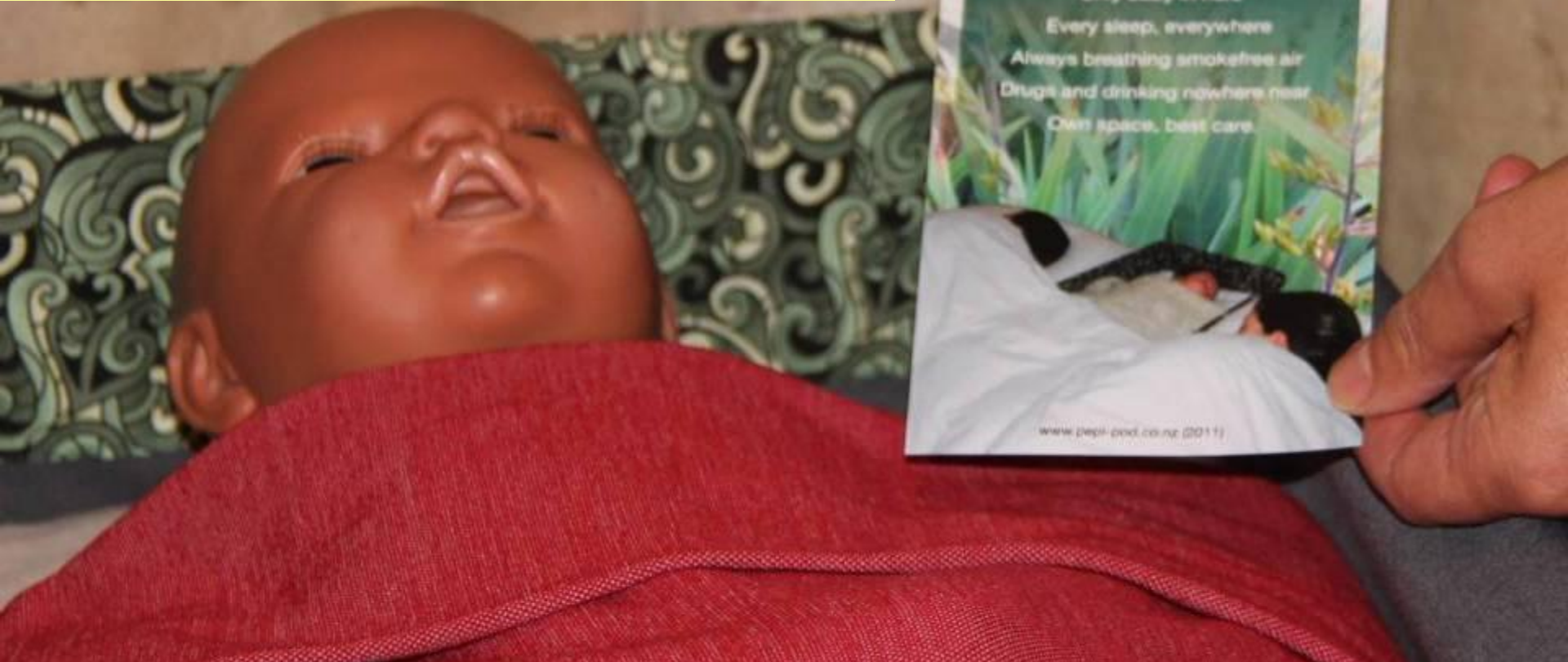
Never use pillows, cushions or anything soft, to make a sleeping space for a baby. These raise the risk of suffocation.

A large, bold black 'X' mark is placed on the left side of the image, indicating that sleeping on a pillow is dangerous.

Never sleep a baby **on** or **near**
a pillow. It is easier to suffocate.

A large, bold black 'X' mark is placed on the right side of the image, indicating that sleeping near a pillow is dangerous.A large, bold black 'X' mark is placed at the bottom center of the image, indicating that sleeping on a pillow is dangerous.

We need parents to help with spreading this education.
In exchange for the pod, please pass what you have learned today to other parents.
When finished with the pod, pass it to another baby or pass it back.





Many people and businesses have made it possible for you and your baby to have this pēpi-pod. The community is supporting you.

Safe Swaddling

If parents choose to swaddle, babies need to be **wrapped firmly**, be able to **maintain a clear face** and always be **lying flat** and **on their backs** unless they are being held.

Stop swaddling when a baby starts trying to roll over.



There are many ways to wrap or swaddle babies. Which ever way you choose, the **end result** must be the same:

- ✓ baby feels firmly held across the shoulders,
- ✓ can find hands easily if wants to suck,
- ✓ can bring arms out for cooling if needs to,
- ✓ will not change position (that means, is sure to stay on the back)
- ✓ and the face is sure to stay clear.

Protecting head shape

Babies who have 5-10 minutes of tummy time each day in their first 6-8 weeks do not develop flat heads.

Time across you knee, being breastfed and being held all help gravity to shape the head. Varying the resting position during sleep helps, too.

Tummy time for a very young baby is time across your knee each day. This helps gravity protect head shape.

