



*Protect your little bundle...*

**from birth and beyond.**



Staffordshire  
**Safeguarding  
Children Partnership**





# *Introduction*

Accidents in and around the home are a leading preventable cause of death and emergency hospital admissions for children, particularly those under 5 years.

This booklet is brought to you by the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Child Death Overview Panel. It is designed to raise awareness of potential hazards and brings together advice from local and national campaigns.

We hope you find the following pages useful, they are packed full of tips you can follow to keep your baby as safe and healthy as possible.

Remember, the best way to keep your little one safe is to keep an eye on them at all times.



# **How to Reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)**

# Things you can do to reduce the risk of SIDS

- ✓ Keep your baby **SMOKE FREE** during pregnancy and after birth



- ✓ Place your baby to sleep in a separate cot or Moses basket in the same room as you for the first 6 months

- ✓ Breastfeed your baby if you can

**SIDS risk is halved in babies who are breastfed for at least 2 months**



- ✓ Use a firm, flat, waterproof mattress in good condition

Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden and unexpected death of a baby where no cause is found. Whilst SIDS is rare, it can still happen and there are steps you can take to reduce the risk to your baby.

We do not know what causes SIDS. For many babies it is likely that a combination of factors affect them at a vulnerable stage of their development, which leads them to die suddenly and unexpectedly.

Many more babies have died suddenly when placed to sleep on their front or side, than on their back. Since the Back to Sleep Campaign in 1991 the rate of SIDS has dropped by 77%.

- ✓ Put babies on their **BACK** for every sleep  
In a **CLEAR, FLAT, FIRM, SLEEP SPACE**



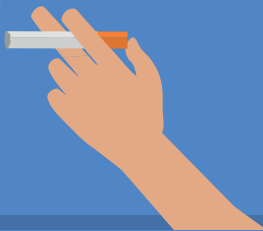
# Things to avoid

You should follow the advice for all naps, not just for night time sleep.



Never sleep with your baby on a sofa or armchair

**The risk of SIDS is 50 times higher for babies when they sleep on a sofa or armchair**



Don't sleep in the same bed as your baby if you smoke, drink or take drugs, or are extremely tired, or if your baby was born prematurely or was of low birth weight



Don't let your baby get too hot or too cold

Don't cover their face or head while sleeping or use loose bedding

## Safer Sleep with Teddy

Babies need to stay at the right temperature or they can easily become too hot or too cold. The risk of SIDS is higher in babies who get too hot. Every baby is different, and checking for signs of overheating means you can adjust their clothes and bedding if you need to. Use a thermometer to monitor the temperature in the room.

Check your babies temperature regularly by checking their chest or the back of their neck.

Talk to your midwife or health visitor if you are unsure about what to dress your baby in for the environment.



A photograph of a woman and a baby sleeping together in a bed. The woman is on the left, leaning over the baby. The baby is in the center, wearing a striped onesie. They are both sleeping peacefully on a white surface.

## Co-sleeping with your baby

**Some parents choose to share a bed or other sleep surface (also known as co-sleeping) with their baby.**

Make your bed a safer place, whether you doze off accidentally, or choose to bed share:

- Keep your baby away from the pillows, adult duvets and loose bedding
- Make sure your baby cannot fall out of bed or become trapped between the mattress and wall
- Make sure the bedclothes cannot cover your baby's face
- Don't leave your baby alone in the bed, as even very young babies can wriggle into a dangerous position
- It is not safe to bed-share in the early months if your baby was born very small or pre-term

### *Out of your usual routine?*

If you are going out, staying with friends or relatives make sure you have a plan where you and your baby will be sleeping. This helps avoid being in high risk situations like falling asleep on a sofa or sharing a bed when you have been drinking.

**WARNING****HIGH RISK****When not to co-sleep**

It is important for you to know that there are some circumstances in which co-sleeping with your baby can be **very dangerous**:

- Either you or your partner smokes (even if you do not smoke in the bedroom)
- Either you or your partner has drunk alcohol or taken drugs (including medications that may make you drowsy)
- Your baby was born premature (before 37 weeks)
- Your baby was born at a low weight (2.5kg or 5½ lbs or less)
- Never sleep on a sofa or armchair with your baby, this can increase the risk of SIDS by 50 times





# The T.I.C.K.S. Rule for Safe Babywearing

Keep your baby close and keep your baby safe

- ✓ **T**IGHT
- ✓ **I**N VIEW AT ALL TIMES
- ✓ **C**LOSE ENOUGH TO KISS
- ✓ **K**EEP CHIN OFF THE CHEST
- ✓ **S**UPPORTED BACK



**Tight** – slings should be tight enough to hug your baby close. Loose fabric allows them to slump which can hinder their breathing.

**In view** – you should always be able to see your baby's face . Their face should be outward , without restriction, NOT turned in towards your body.

**Close** – your baby's head should be as close to your chin as comfortable. You should be able to kiss their forehead.

**Keep their chin off their chest** – a baby should never be curled so their chin is on their chest, it immediately restricts breathing. Ensure a space at least a finger space wide between their chin and chest.

**Supported back** – a baby should be held comfortably close to the wearer so their back is supported in its natural position. If a sling is too loose they can slump which can partially block their airway.

# I can't breathe.

Smoking in pregnancy and living in a smoking household have been identified as modifiable factors in a high number of neonatal deaths in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

Protecting your baby from tobacco smoke is one of the best things you can do to give your child a healthy start in life.

Smoking causes risks of complications in pregnancy and birth, risk of still birth, premature birth, low birth weight, a greater risk of sudden infant death syndrome and problems with the child in later life, such as asthma and other serious illnesses that may need hospital treatment.

Stopping smoking will help both you and your baby immediately. Free programmes are available to help pregnant mums and their partners, or other household members to stop smoking for good:

**If you live in Staffordshire**

Call 03330 050095 or text QUIT to 60777



**If you live in Stoke on Trent**

Call 0808 169 1869 or visit [quitsmokingstoke.co.uk](http://quitsmokingstoke.co.uk)

# What's wrong?

Crying is the most powerful way that a baby can communicate. It's also the only way of letting you know that something's making them unhappy. Sometimes you won't know why your baby is crying, and that is completely normal.



IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR BABY'S CRYING  
OR GENERAL HEALTH TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR,  
MIDWIFE OR HEALTH VISITOR

**If your baby cries they may be  
too hot or too cold.....**





WWW.ICONCOPE.ORG



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Infant crying is normal and it will stop! Babies start to cry more frequently from around 2 weeks of age. After about 8 weeks of age babies start to cry less.



Comfort methods can sometimes soothe the baby and the crying will stop. Is the baby hungry, tired or in need of a nappy change?



It's ok to walk away if you have checked the baby is safe and the crying is getting to you. After a few minutes when you are feeling calm, go back and check on the baby.



Never, ever shake or hurt a baby. It can cause lasting brain damage or death.

**Babies Cry,  
You Can  
Cope**



**Speak to someone if you need support such as your family, friends, Midwife, Health Visitor or GP.**

# How safe am I from a serious fall?

We're always falling over our feet. But sometimes, when we fall further and hit something hard, we can be badly hurt. Falling downstairs or out of windows can hurt our brains as well as our bodies.



child accident  
prevention trust



Every day, 45 children under five, like me, are admitted to hospital because we have fallen and hurt ourselves at home.

## Why do we fall so much?

- We love to explore and try new things.
- As we grow up we surprise you, and sometimes us too, with what we can do.
- We are not scared of trying new things and have no sense of danger.
- If we see a chance to do something you have told us not to, because we could get hurt, we might still try to do it because we don't understand what can go wrong.

## What can you do to keep me safer at home?

- Once I start crawling, fit safety gates to stop me climbing the stairs or falling down them.
- When buying me a highchair, check it has a five point harness, like the one in my buggy, strap me into my highchair everytime.
- Fit safety catches or locks to our window.
- If you fit window locks, put the keys

somewhere you can find them easily, so we can get out if there is a fire.

- Keep furniture, like my bed or the sofa, away from the windows, to stop me climbing up.

## In an emergency

If I am knocked unconscious when I fall, call 999 right away and ask for an ambulance.

The ambulance will be on its way straight away, and the call taker will ask a series of questions until it arrives

- tell them how long I have been unconscious or, if I'm waking up, how I am – they will tell you what to do while we wait for the ambulance.
- If I wake up, tell me to stay as still as possible, just in case I have broken anything.

**Considered doing a first aid course?  
It could save my life in a crisis.**

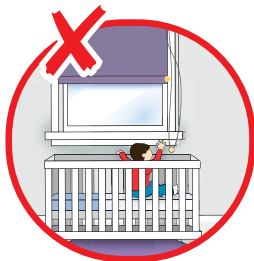
West Midlands Ambulance Service



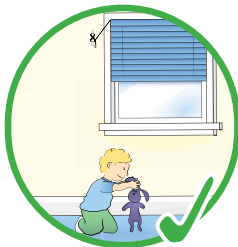
NHS Foundation Trust

# Blind cords and chains can kill children

Window or door blind cords and chains can pose a real risk for babies and children. Young children have already tragically died in Staffordshire as a result of blind cord strangulation and many more children have died or been seriously injured across the UK.



Move beds, cots, highchairs away from window covering cords and chains.



Make sure all cords and chains are always secured out of reach of babies and young children.



Move furniture away from window covering cords and chains as children love to climb.

Messages from Staffordshire parents who have tragically lost their children.

***"You never think it will happen to you."***

(Parents of Lillian)

***"Ban corded blinds"***

(Parents of Harrison)

***Make it safe***

For further information go to [www.makeitsafe.org.uk](http://www.makeitsafe.org.uk)



**make it  
safe**

**PLEASE ACT NOW** to help to keep your children safe and prevent any further tragedies.

# Babies can suffocate on nappy sacks

– at least 18 babies in England and Wales have already died.

## Don't:

- ✗ Place nappy sacks in or near a baby's cot or pram.

## Why do nappy sacks pose a suffocation hazard to babies?

- Young babies naturally grasp anything and put it in their mouths, but they find it more difficult to let go.
- Nappy sacks are small enough to fit in little mouths.



## Do:

- ✓ Always keep nappy sacks, plastic bags away from babies and young children.
- ✓ Be aware of suffocation hazards around the home.
- ✓ Keep animals, particularly cats out of babies bedrooms.



# Sepsis Awareness

Children in Staffordshire have suffered a sudden death related to infections and sepsis.

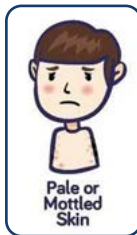
Sepsis is a life threatening condition

## What are the early signs and symptoms of sepsis?

- Flu-like illness, chest infection
- Fever (high temperature) or very low temperature, or seizures
- Not eating, drinking, sucking poorly, or vomiting
- Fast or slow heart rate
- Pale or discoloured skin
- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Weakness, irritability, drowsiness, and harder to wake than normal
- Has a fit or convulsion
- Localised muscle tenderness, severe muscle aches

## What should I do if these symptoms develop:

- Contact your GP or seek medical advice immediately



# Childhood Immunisations

**Some infectious diseases can kill children or cause lasting damage to their health.**

Your child's immune system needs help to fight those diseases. Immunisation gives protection against some infectious diseases. Vaccines stimulate the body to produce antibodies that fight infection. Immunisation is also known as 'vaccination', 'jab' or 'injection'.

*For further information go to:*

*<https://staffsstoikeics.org.uk/vaccinations-for-babies-and-children-aged-0-5/>*

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GOV.UK



# A BABIES IMMUNE SYSTEM

Babies have immature immune systems, which means that they are particularly at risk from infections

Key things that everyone can do to reduce the risks:



- Don't visit a baby if you are ill or have recently been ill.
- Don't visit a baby if you have active cold sores or diarrhoea and vomiting illnesses

## TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

If you feel that something is 'not quite right' with your baby, seek help from your midwife, health visitor, GP, NHS 111 or visit an emergency department if you are very worried.



# Loads...

## of temptation?

Liquitabs can look like sweets or toys to young children.

They are highly toxic, and can cause problems if swallowed.

Keep them out of a child's reach. Put away medicines, e-cigarettes and painkillers away, they can all be fatal to children.

Just because products have safety caps this doesn't stop children being able to open them, it may only slow them down.

In the event of an accident seek **URGENT** medical attention.

# Be one step ahead

**Batteries react with saliva and if a child swallows a button battery it can burn holes and cause internal bleeding and even death**

## **They can be fatal if swallowed.**

*Sadly a little girl from Staffordshire was rushed to hospital for emergency surgery after she started to vomit blood, but tragically died during the operation. Her devastated mother later discovered a remote control with a missing battery.*



## **Trust your instincts**

- The symptoms of swallowing a button battery may not be obvious.
- Your child might be coughing, gagging, or drooling, or pointing to their throat or tummy at times so it is important to be vigilant.
- Even if there are no symptoms, trust your instincts and act fast .  
**Call 999** for an ambulance or take them straight to the nearest Accident and Emergency.

# ANYTHING CAN BLOCK YOUR CHILD'S AIRWAY!

**Rounded foods, and anything difficult to chew or swallow. 'Babies can even choke on milk.'**

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

- ✓ Give foods in small amounts
- ✓ Cut grapes and cherries etc. into quarters
- ✓ Avoid hard foods such raw carrot
- ✓ Increase texture of foods gradually
- ✓ Cook fruit and vegetables until soft
- ✓ Teach older children not to give small toys to younger children
- ✗ Do not prop up or leave babies alone with a bottle



# Choking

## What to do if a child is choking

### 1. Cough it out

- Encourage the child to keep coughing

### 2. Slap it out

- Give 5 sharp back blows between the shoulder blades
- Check their mouth each time

### 3. Squeeze it out

- Give 5 abdominal thrusts
- Check their mouth each time

### 4. Call 999/112 for emergency help

- Repeat steps 2 and 3 until help arrives.

Courtesy of



St John Ambulance 08700 104950 [www.sja.org.uk](http://www.sja.org.uk)



## What to do if a baby is choking

### 1. Slap it out

- Lay your baby face down on your thigh and support their head
- Give 5 back blows between their shoulder blades
- Turn them over and check their mouth each time

### 2. Squeeze it out

- Using two fingers, give 5 downward chest thrusts
- Check the mouth each time

### 3. Call 999/112 for emergency help

- Take your baby with you to call
- Repeat the steps 1 to 2 until help arrives.

# Preventing Burns and Scalds

- ✓ Turn off all electrical equipment you are not using
- ✓ View fireworks from a safe distance, at least 8m for garden fireworks and 25m for display fireworks
- ✓ Ensure your fire alarm is working, and a carbon monoxide alarm is fitted
- ✓ Check the heat of the water, a good test is your elbow. Put cold water in the bath first
- ✗ Keep matches and lighters out of sight and reach of children
- ✗ Never let children play with fireworks of any type
- ✗ Do not place beds against radiators

## WARNING

Hair Straighteners can cause serious burns to children

- ✓ Switch off after use
- ✓ Put in a heat resistant bag
- ✓ Put straighteners and flex out of reach of children





# A child's skin is far more sensitive than an adults

- ✓ Switch off appliances after use
- ✓ Keep hot drinks out of a child's reach
- ✓ Use a cordless kettle
- ✓ Use the back rings of your cooker and keep handles away from the edge
- ✓ If possible keep children out of the kitchen when cooking
- ✗ Don't drink hot drinks with your child on your lap or in your arms

**'95% of all childhood burns and scalds happen at home. Most are caused in the day-to-day situations that many parents don't anticipate, like children reaching a hot drink or grabbing hair straighteners'**

For Safe and Well advice contact Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service  
on 0800 0241 999



**Staffordshire**  
Fire and Rescue Service  
preventing • protecting • responding

# car seat Safety

Take me out of the car seat when the journey is over... even if I'm sleeping

Baby car seats are designed to keep your child secure for the car journey **ONLY**

Baby car seats should not be used as a place for babies to sleep or nap.

In a car seat a baby is in a restricted position. Babies don't have the neck strength to lift their heads and breathe.

**ROSPA advise in the first few months of life journeys should be kept short, ideally no longer than 30 minutes.**

**Babies should be taken out of their car seats regularly for a stretch.**



**Don't let your baby get too hot in the car**

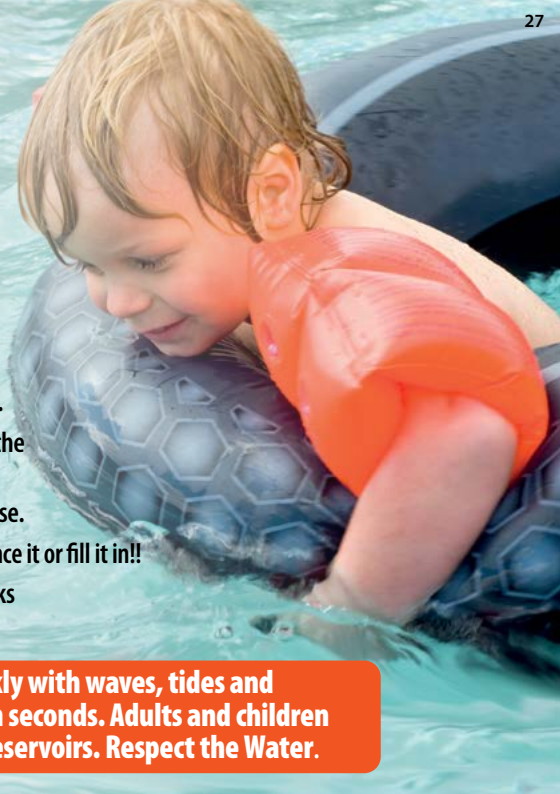
# Drowning

**Babies can drown in as little as 25mm of water**

25mm

- ✗ Never leave a baby or child in the bath unsupervised, not even for a minute.
- ✗ Never leave a baby or child alone in a bath seat.
- ✓ Watch over your child and stay with them in the swimming pool.
- ✓ Empty paddling pools when they are not in use.
- ✓ If you have a pond always supervise closely, fence it or fill it in!!
- ✓ Be careful when children visit gardens or parks that have ponds or lakes.

**The sea and shorelines can change quickly with waves, tides and hidden currents that can drag you out in seconds. Adults and children should never swim in rivers, lakes and reservoirs. Respect the Water.**



In an  
emergency  
**999**

# Contacts

*For further information or advice contact:*

**111** [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) **NHS**

**For your Health Visitor:**

**Tel:**

**For your GP:**

**Tel:**

NHS 111 can help you get medical help right now if you cannot contact your GP or need urgent care. Call 111 on your phone for this service.

COP2151

Produced by the Child Death Overview Panel for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent  
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