

Safe sleeping for babies this Christmas

Press release and website news content

Parents are being encouraged to ensure their babies sleep safe this Christmas by following some festive top tips.

The NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) is launching the festive-themed campaign promoting top tips for babies having a safe sleep and highlighting the risks of co-sleeping.

It comes as many families prepare for the busy Christmas period and highlights the risks of sharing your bed with your baby or sleeping on the sofa or armchair with them when you feel tired or have had a festive tipple.

The campaign's main message is that the safest place for babies to sleep is in a cot or moses basket in the same room as their parents/carers, to keep baby safe and reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

A survey by the Lullaby Trust revealed that many parents co-sleep with their baby and that some have accidentally fallen asleep. In the run up to Christmas, the ICB is highlighting some top tips to ensure babies have the safest sleep, while mum, dad and the family can still enjoy the Christmas festivities.

Top tips this Christmas for a safe sleep for baby:

- Don't sleep on a sofa or in an armchair with your baby – 50 times increase in risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS);
- Do place your baby to sleep in a separate cot or moses basket in the same room as you for the first 6 months;
- Don't sleep in the same bed as your baby if you smoke, have drunk alcohol, have taken drugs, are extremely tired or if your baby was born prematurely or was of low birth weight;
- Remember, the safest place for your baby in the first 6 months is a cot in your room;
- Talk to your health visitor or midwife if you have any questions or concerns.

David Purdue, executive chief nurse, NHS North East and North Cumbria ICB said: "Christmas is a time for fun and festivities, for coming together with family and friends and enjoying each other's company as well as a few drinks and some nice food.

"We want everyone to enjoy the Christmas holidays and for babies to sleep safely and follow the top tips on the Lullaby Trust website".

"If you've had an alcoholic drink or taken medication, you need an appropriate adult to take care of your baby. Baby will be safest in their own separate sleeping place, ideally in a cot in your room. If you're heading out over Christmas to see family and friends, take a travel cot for baby to keep them safe and comfortable.

"By following the Lullaby Trust's top tips, you and baby can have a fun and safe Christmas holiday. For further information, visit the Lullaby Trust website at www.lullabytrust.org.uk."

Health Visitor, Sharon Bell said: "The safest place for a baby to sleep in is their own clear, flat separate sleep space, such as a cot or Moses basket. However, we know that many parents find themselves co-sleeping, whether they mean to or not. In these instances, please co-sleep more safely."

Parents and carers should take note of the following top tips:

- Keep pillows and adult bedding away from your baby or any other items that could cover their head or cause them to overheat. A high proportion of babies who die as a result of SIDS are found with their head covered by loose bedding;
- Follow the [Lullaby Trust's safer sleep advice](#) to reduce the risk of SIDS such as sleeping baby on their back;
- To reduce the risk of accidents, do not bring other children or pets into bed with you;
- Try to make sure or check that baby cannot be trapped, wedged or fall out of bed or get trapped between the mattress and the wall;
- Never leave your baby unattended in an adult bed.

If you are bedsharing with your baby, you should consider any risks before every sleep. It is easy for your situation to change if you are unwell or have drunk any alcohol, which means your baby will be safest in a separate sleep space such as a cot or Moses basket on that occasion.