



# Preventing Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI)

Information for  
parents and caregivers

For more information go to  
<http://www.moh.govt.nz>  
<http://www.cymrc.health.govt.nz>



Child and  
Youth  
Mortality  
Review  
Committee



April 2008

HE 1919

New Zealand Government



Following the advice given here can  
help reduce the risk of SUDI.

**Sudden unexpected death in infancy (SUDI)** used to be called **SIDS** or **cot death**.

## **No smoking during pregnancy**

Smoking during pregnancy is an important cause of SUDI because smoking damages babies before they are born. It is important to stop smoking as soon as possible after a pregnancy has been confirmed. Many women find that it is easier to give up smoking when they are pregnant. A midwife or health practitioner can help pregnant women and other household members who smoke quit smoking. A phone call to Quitline (0800 778 778) can help people to stop smoking.

## **Sleeping position – Back to sleep**

Put babies down to sleep on their backs. Babies who sleep on their backs are less likely to get their faces accidentally covered by sheets or bedding.

## **Sleeping environment**

### **Room sharing**

The recommended sleeping environment is having baby sleeping in a cot or bassinette near the parents' bed.

Babies who sleep in the same room as parents for the first six months are at lower risk of SUDI.

### **Co-sleeping**

Co-sleeping (a parent who sleeps with their baby in bed) is dangerous when:

- the baby's mother has smoked during pregnancy
- the adult in bed with the baby has been drinking, or taking drugs or medicines that might reduce their awareness of the baby
- the co-sleeping adult is excessively tired.

There is also a small increase in the risk of SUDI from co-sleeping for babies less than three months old, whether or not the mother smoked during pregnancy.

## **Breastfeeding – 'Breast is best'**

Breastfeeding has many benefits for mothers and babies. Breastfeeding helps to keep babies healthy and well.