

# Safe Wrapping

Guidelines for safe wrapping of young babies



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## Benefits of Safe Wrapping

- ✓ Wrapping is a useful method to help babies settle and sleep on their back. Scientific studies have shown that wrapping can have a calming, sleep-promoting effect on young babies.
- ✓ Studies have shown that wrapping can promote more sustained sleep and reduce the frequency of spontaneous awakenings.
- ✓ An alternative to wrapping is to use a safe infant sleeping bag.

### ! Alert

Tummy sleeping increases the risk of sudden and unexpected death in infancy (SUDI) and must be avoided. Placing a wrapped baby on their tummy to sleep is especially dangerous as it prevents them moving to a safe position.

If you wrap your baby, consider baby's stage of development. Leave arms free once the startle reflex disappears at around 3 months. Most babies eventually resist being wrapped. Wrapping style should be appropriate for the baby's developmental stage.

It is essential to discontinue wrapping as soon as baby starts showing signs that they can begin to roll, usually between 3-4 months. The wrap may prevent an older baby who has turned onto their tummy during sleep from returning to the back sleeping position.

## How To Safely Wrap Your Baby



- 1 Place baby off-centre (to left or right) with top of wrap level with shoulders.



- 2 Fold baby's arm across chest and bring shorter side of wrap across baby's arm and tuck firmly under baby.



- 3 Bring larger side of wrap across and tuck under baby.



- 4 Bring the bottom of the wrap on top of baby.



- 5 Fold the bottom of the wrap under baby.



- 6 Always sleep baby on their back with head and face uncovered.

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## Safe Wrapping

- Recommended fabrics for wrapping include a muslin or light cotton sheet or wrap. Bunny rugs and blankets are not as safe for wrapping as they may cause over-heating.
  - For wrapping to be effective, wrap needs to be firm but not too tight. Techniques that use tight wrapping with legs straight and together increase the risk of abnormal hip development. Allow for hip and chest wall expansion when wrapping.
  - Loose wraps are hazardous as they can cover baby's head and face.
  - Babies must not be over-dressed under the wrap, e.g. use only a singlet and nappy in warm weather or light grow suit in cooler weather.
  - Use a wrapping technique suitable for baby's developmental age. Wrapping can reduce the effects of the Moro or startle reflex for a younger baby by including arms in wrap.
  - Help an older baby stay on their back by wrapping their lower body but leaving their hands and arms free to self soothe.
- ! Discontinue wrapping as soon as baby starts showing signs that they can begin to roll.
- ! Never use swaddles or wraps that restrain a baby's arms with velcro or zips.
- ! Do not wrap baby higher than the shoulders so baby's face and head remain uncovered.

### ! Alert

Sharing a sleep surface with a baby may increase the risk of Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy. Sharing a sleep surface with a baby is especially dangerous if the baby is wrapped.

## Safe Sleeping Recommendations

- ✓ Always place baby on the back to sleep, never on the tummy or side
- ✓ Keep baby's face and head uncovered
- ✓ Keep baby smoke free before and after birth
- ✓ Safe Sleeping environment night and day
- ✓ Sleep baby in their own safe sleep space in the parent or caregiver's room for the first 6 months
- ✓ Breastfeed baby



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