



From the desk of Dr Harry

SWADDLING AND SAFE SLEEPING PRACTICES

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Since the early 1990's, we have been researching and recommending safe sleeping practices for babies in order to reduce the incidence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). This has evolved into the current safe sleeping recommendations:

- *Sleep baby on the back from birth, not on the tummy or side*
- *Sleep baby with face uncovered (no doonas, pillows, lamb's wool, bumpers or soft toys)*
- *Avoid exposing babies to tobacco smoke before birth and after*
- *Provide a safe sleeping environment (safe cot, safe mattress, safe bedding)*
- *Sleep baby in their own safe sleeping environment next to the parent's bed for the first six to twelve months of life*

It has been believed that swaddling (wrapping) babies and placing them on their back, not only aids settling and falling off to sleep but also reduces the risk of SIDS in first 4 months.

A recent study suggested that 'arousal response thresholds' were higher in swaddled babies and that these babies may not wake up adequately in response to stimuli. A question then arose as to whether swaddling may increase rather than decrease the risk of SIDS.

This hot off the press editorial [To Swaddle or not to Swaddle](#), from the reputable Journal of Paediatrics, looks at the currently available information on swaddling. It concludes that the **advantages** of swaddling outweigh the risks, if any.

I agree.

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