

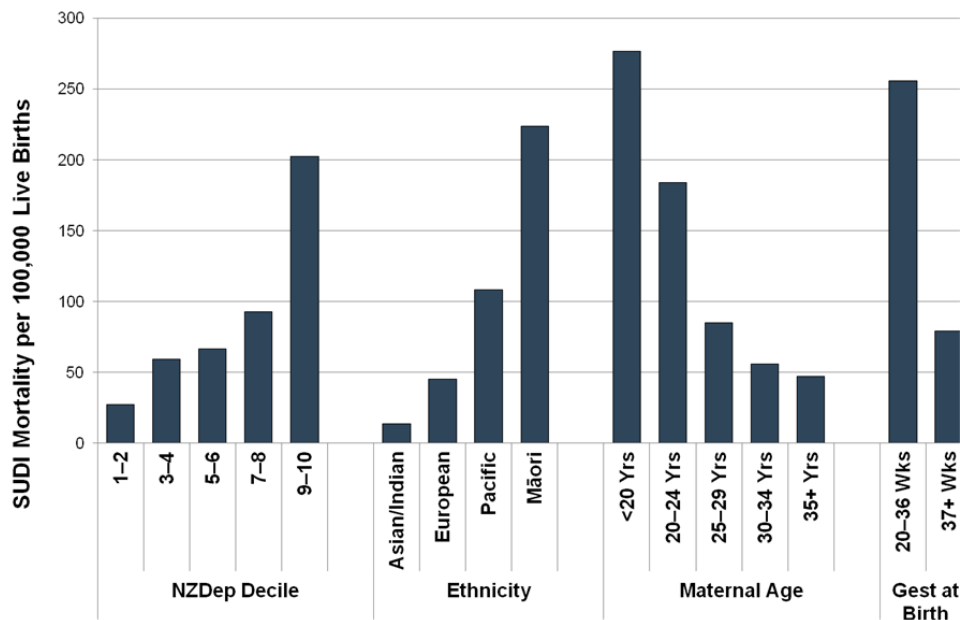
Safe Sleeping Information and Advice

Aim: To support families to ensure safe sleeping environments are always available.

The current situation

Sixty infants die of Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) [1] each year in New Zealand. Among the industrialised nations, New Zealand has the highest rate of death from SUDI with 1.1 deaths per 1000 live births. The rate for Māori is 2.3 deaths per 1000 births (nearly five times the rate for those of other ethnicity - CYMRC Fifth Report Chapter 1). A large number of these deaths could be prevented if infants slept in safe places.

Risk Factors SUDI, New Zealand 2004–2008



NZCYES Source: Numerator: National Mortality Collection; Denominator: Birth Registration Dataset.

Note: Rates are per 100,000; Rate Ratios are unadjusted; Ethnicity is Level 1 Prioritised

Factors that increase the risk of SUDI include, smoke exposure before birth, born before 37 weeks, less than 2.5kg at birth, young mothers, caregivers less alert or aware because of alcohol, medications, drugs, illness or exhaustion and weakness or illness in the baby.

It is important that every infant sleeps in circumstances where suffocation or interference with ability to breathe, is kept to a minimum. Infants, especially those under three months, can easily die while asleep if their faces are covered, necks are flexed or from pressure on the chest. These infants

[1] SUDI – the sudden death of an infant under one year of age which is unexpected by care givers and may be unexplained or occur because of a disease process or accidental suffocation or strangulation while asleep.

[2] **Suffocation** in place of sleep includes all situations where the whole or part of a body, such as a limb or breast, can cover the face, flex the neck or apply pressure to the chest or abdomen of an infant making it harder to breath. Infants have few mechanisms to protect their own airway because of soft flexible tissues so even slight pressure on the nose or face or neck flexing can lead to suffocation.

[3] **Hazardous spaces** would include couch, mattress or bed not designed for infant sleep (even if nobody is sharing the space), bean bags, cushions or other make shift arrangements.

do not show enough distress to alert parents or caregivers to the problem before they die. It is vital every infant has access to a safe sleep space where the risks of accidental suffocation [2] are minimised and families receive advice about safe sleep. Where infants are at higher risk even more care is needed to ensure a safe sleep space, free from hazardous spaces [3], is available for every sleep.

Nelson Marlborough District Health Board (NMDHB)

The NMDHB advises that all professionals working with families/whānau be supported to help families to apply and achieve first principles of safe sleeping places for babies. A safe sleep space should be:

- **Free from other people who might overlay the infant** – sleep arrangements need to make sure that if someone else moves in sleep, the infant will always be able to breathe easily with a clear airway
- **Free of gaps that could trap or wedge** – there should be no gaps which might trap an infant, wedge them and make breathing hard or impossible
- **Firm** – so the infant's neck does not flex and block breathing and the face cannot get buried in the surface
- **Flat** – so the infant does not suffer compromise to the airway or breathing by rolling over, tipping out, the sleep space turning over or becoming wedged
- **Free from objects that might cover the face** – nothing should be put or hung near the baby that could cover the face or hang into the sleeping area in any way during sleep

Lead Maternity Carers (LMCs)

The universal safe sleep message that is delivered by all LMCs/Midwives for all whānau is:

“Face-up + face clear + smoke free”

- **Face-up** position protects babies during the critical stage of development when awakening
- **Face clear** protects from asphyxia in the sleeping environment
- **Smoke free** (especially during pregnancy) reduces vulnerability

LMCs/Midwives should ensure that all women/partners/whānau have the support and resources needed to protect the wellbeing of their infants by discussing the following key points with them:

- **Position:** place baby to sleep lying face up (on their back)
- **Airway:** ensure baby's face is clear and will stay clear throughout the period of sleep
- **Development:** support for a smokefree pregnancy and home for baby
- **Environment:** the **safest** place for a baby to sleep is in their own safe space, preferably one designed for babies, such as a cot, bassinet, wahakura or other type of 'baby bed'
- **Closeness:** have the baby in the same room as a parent (when the parent is also sleeping) until the baby is at least six months old
- **Nutrition:** exclusively breastfeed baby
- **Watchful:** check for potential hazards in a baby's sleeping environment. Support parents to be vigilant to potential hazards, particularly when baby is not sleeping in its usual safe sleep place



INFORMATION SHEET

Well Child / Tamariki Ora providers

Well Child providers incorporate safe sleeping discussions with parents/caregivers at every developmental assessment until the child is one year.

Initiatives which support SUDI prevention include:

- Face up; Face clear; Smokefree; Breastfed; Close to parent; Handled Gently
- Plunket have a number of bassinets which can be hired out
- Coming soon are Plunket Pepi Pods, which can be hired
- Plunket have bed linen that can be given to families
- When Plunket hire/give out any of the above, it will be accompanied with a Baby Essentials SUDI prevention cot card explaining the principles of prevention of SUDI

Providers include:

- **Plunket** – Nelson, Tasman, Wairau – phone: 03 539 4323
- **Te Korowai Trust** – Nelson and Tasman – phone: 03 547 5958
- **Maata Waka** – Wairau – phone: 03 577 9156

Work and Income

Support for purchasing appropriate bedding is available from Work and Income under certain conditions; so please liaise with the Work and Income case manager.

Note: You do not have to be receiving a benefit to apply for assistance.

Special Needs Grant Eligibility:

If the client meets all qualifications, they may be able to receive a Special Needs Grant for the cost of bedding (which can include a cot or bassinet) if:

- there is a long-term sickness, or disability in the client's immediate family causing extraordinary wear and tear on bed linen, or
- an additional child has been incorporated into the immediate family by way of birth or adoption.

Special needs grant payment: The maximum amount payable towards the cost of bedding is \$200.

Conditions: Special Needs Grant of up to \$200, for the purpose of purchasing bedding, is available under the following conditions:

- Restricted to one payment for the same or similar purpose in any 52 week period and
- The client must:
 - Meet an income and cash asset test;
 - Have an essential need, emergency need or require payment for specific circumstances;
 - Not able to meet the need from their own resources or through other sources;
 - Have taken reasonable steps to improve their financial circumstances, including completing a budgeting activity (if required);
 - Be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident (i.e. not be in New Zealand unlawfully or on a temporary permit); and,
 - Generally be an ordinary resident in New Zealand.
- If the need for replacement bedding is on-going for someone with a long-term illness or disability, the person or parent/caregiver of the child can apply for assistance through the Disability Allowance or Child Disability Allowance.

- **NOTE:** Again, you do not need to be receiving a benefit to apply for this financial help.

Website Information for Safe Sleeping

- Health Quality and Safety Commission – summary of information, media work and links to other resources:
<http://www.hqsc.govt.nz/our-programmes/mrc/cymrc/publications-and-resources/sudi/>
- Recommended site for health professionals to use for training is:
http://www.changeforourchildren.co.nz/safe_start_programme/baby_essentials_online
- A further training resource (Queensland):
<http://www.sidsandkids.org/offices/queensland/online-education-safe-sleeping/>
- Pepi pods page with instructions:
<http://www.changeforourchildren.co.nz/pepi-pod/index>
- Whakawhetu - Māori SIDS website:
<http://www.whakawhetu.co.nz/>
- Wahakura, video, instructions at bottom of website:
<http://maorisids.org.nz/>