

A photograph of a baby sleeping peacefully in a crib. The baby is lying on a white sheet, and a small purple tag with the words 'SAVE OUR SLEEP' is attached to the mattress. The entire scene is framed by a light blue circular border with a crescent moon and stars at the top and bottom.

SAVE
OUR
SLEEP®

TIZZIE HALL
THE INTERNATIONAL
BABY WHISPERER

Safe Bedding Guide

The Save Our Sleep® guide to helping babies sleep safe and sound.

Welcome to the [Save Our Sleep®](#) bedding guide. I've drawn on my many years of experience, research and knowledge to put this guide together for you. I would like parents to be able to come to one place for all the information they need when it comes to bedding for their baby.

This guide covers:

- Where to sleep your baby
- Cots and mini-cribs
- Mattresses
- Mattress protectors
- Dressing the bed
- Clothing for the baby
- Age-appropriate recommendations
- Location-appropriate recommendations

This guide is divided into three easy-to-follow sections. *Bedding for your baby* outlines the items your baby should have to sleep in, such as cots, cribs and blankets. *Clothing your baby* provides information on dressing your baby for sleep. *Putting your baby to bed* looks at cocooning and room temperature. There are also a set of quick and easy reference tables at the end of the guide to assist you.

Included within the guide are many of the questions I'm often asked about these topics, with detailed answers and solutions, and two case studies in which I've assisted families with their baby's sleeping. The information in the guide comes from what I've found works. Please be aware it is purely a guide, and to be used as such. My aim is to simplify the process of bedding for your baby, eliminate the myths and help you successfully navigate your way through parenthood.

Any products I mention within the guide are readily available to you in the [Save Our Sleep® online and destination store](#). All products are tried and tested and come with my personal recommendation. I only stock products in my store that I know to be best for our families, especially our babies.

I hope this [Save Our Sleep®](#) bedding guide will give you the confidence to raise happy and contented children.

Le gach dea-ghui,

Tizzie Hall.

Introduction

The first three months of a baby's life are sometimes referred to as the fourth trimester. When they are born, babies appreciate conditions that are similar to what they've known in the womb. They love to be very warm and secure. I've found that keeping this idea of the fourth trimester in mind when getting a baby's bedding ready is very helpful.

I always recommend parents read and are familiar with their own country's safe sleeping recommendations for babies. In Australia the official organisation is [SIDS and Kids](http://www.sidsandkids.org) (<http://www.sidsandkids.org>), in New Zealand, [SIDS New Zealand](http://sids.org.nz) (<http://sids.org.nz>), in Ireland, [Irish Sudden Infant Death Association](http://www.isida.ie) (<http://www.isida.ie>), and in the United Kingdom, [The Lullaby Trust](http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk) (<http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk>)

The most important rules to remember to protect your little one from SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) and SUDI (Sudden Unexpected Death of an Infant) are to have a totally smoke-free pregnancy and environment for your baby, and to always place your baby in the safe sleeping position of on their back to sleep.

When parents tell me about their baby not sleeping, most of the time it's because their baby is either cold or hungry. I've found a few adjustments to their bedding or feeding is usually all that's needed to help that baby sleep well, day and night. Sometimes it really is as simple as making sure their baby is warm enough, and the sleeping problems vanish.

I have found that:

- Cold babies will roll onto their stomachs to find warmth
- Cold babies will move all about the cot in order to try to find the warmest place to sleep
- Cold babies and toddlers will sleep on their tummy, usually with their hands and arms under their chest, their knees tucked up underneath them, and with their bottom in the air
- Warm babies will stay on their back (the safe sleeping position) and sleep well
- Warm babies have no need to burrow down into the blankets
- Warm babies will stay asleep for longer periods of time

So when a baby isn't sleeping, the first thing I do is ask about his bedding. If your baby is continually rolling onto his stomach, or moving all around the cot at night, the first thing you should check is whether he is warm and cosy enough. Keep this in mind as you go through this bedding guide.

Bedding For Your Baby

Choosing your baby's room

Where will my baby sleep?

There are always different opinions as to where your baby should sleep. I feel that your baby should sleep in the place that enables you to get the most rest. If you would sleep better with your baby in your room with you, then put him in your room. If every little noise your baby makes is going to keep you awake and you would get more sleep with him in a separate room, then put him into his own room.

I do recommend moving your baby to where you would like him to sleep for most of his babyhood by five months of age. Before five months of age, babies are yet to develop night-time sleep cycles. Once

these cycles are developed and your baby is accustomed to sleeping in your room, it will be harder to move your baby into another room. He will have to re-learn how to resettle after these sleep cycles without you nearby, which can be difficult.

I have never found the arrangement of a room to cause any sleep problems, however there are some precautions that you should be aware of. Your little baby will grow up very quickly into an adventurous toddler, so keep this in mind when setting up her room. Keep the cot well away from things you don't want your toddler to reach, such as wires, shelves, light switches or the contents of change tables. Avoid placing the cot close to curtain or blind cords.

If my baby is sleeping in another room, should I be using a baby monitor? What about those monitor that can sense the baby's movements and breathing?

I do not believe you need a baby monitor to be able to hear your baby sleeping in another room. I only recommend using a monitor if you would like extra peace of mind provided by the movement sensors. Our homes are usually set up so that your baby's room is close enough to yours so that you will hear if your baby is crying in the night.

If you do feel that you would like that extra peace of mind that a monitor can bring, I recommend the Anglecare Baby Sound and Movement Monitor. I do not believe this monitor gives off false alarms. It is also the easiest to use with the least amount of movement interference.

I do not recommend video monitors because, anecdotally, they seem to cause sleep problems. I cannot pinpoint what it is about them, but when I ask parents who use them and have a baby with sleep difficulties to stop using the video monitor, the baby sleeps all night.

Cots / mini-cribs

What will your baby sleep in?

Now that you've chosen where your baby will sleep, you need to decide what she should sleep in. There are two sleeping options that I recommend.

The first is a mini-crib. As the name suggests, a mini-crib is a smaller version of a crib/cot. Mini-cribs have slats all the way around, providing the right amount of airflow for your baby.

The second is a regular cot. Be sure that, if one side of the cot drops down, it drops down with a two-handed dropping mechanism. This way only an adult can release the side to make it drop down. Do not purchase a cot where you have to push against the side to make that side drop down. In time, this can cause a gap between the cot side and the mattress which may lead to entrapment.

If you have large budget, I recommend starting your baby in a mini-crib, then moving your baby into a regular-sized cot by eight months. However, if you are on a tight budget, using a cot from birth (skipping the mini-crib) is fine.

It is worth considering whether you are planning to have more children in a short space of time. If so, your first baby could very well still be using his cot when the second baby comes along, so having a mini-crib as well as a cot may mean there is no need to purchase a second cot, or to move your toddler out of his cot before he is ready. In this case, buying a mini-crib for baby number one is a more economical option.

There are several items available that I **do not** recommend you sleep your baby in. The first are bassinets and moses baskets. Cots are required to meet strict safety guidelines before they can be sold to parents. However, in Australia, there are no such guidelines for bassinets and moses baskets.

Bassinets and moses baskets do not meet the safety guidelines set out for cots, so the risk of a sleep accident is increased if a bassinet is used.

Also, it is important that the cot or mini-crib your baby sleeps in has slats all the way around it to provide adequate airflow. Most bassinets and moses baskets do not provide enough airflow around your baby.

Similarly, I do not recommend hammocks. Like bassinets and moses baskets, hammocks do not have to meet safety guidelines before they can be sold to parents and do not provide enough airflow around your baby. Hammocks can easily be knocked over or moved while your baby is in them, which is not safe. In my experience it is very difficult to transition a hammock-sleeping baby to a cot.

Swinging cribs are nice to look at but there is a temptation to rock them, and rocking can very quickly become a sleep aid. They are also dangerous if they are rocked without your supervision, because your baby could slip to the side of the crib and become trapped.

I'm often asked the best time to transition a child from sleeping in a cot to sleeping in a bed. I recommend that girls should be two and a half years of age and boys should be three years of age before they are moved into a big bed. I have found children younger than this are not mature enough to handle the diminished boundaries that come with sleeping in a bed.

Is my baby too small to be in a big cot when she is a newborn? She seems so little.

No, not at all. She will be dressed appropriately and have the right amount of safe bedding to ensure she feels warm, safe and secure. The size of the cot doesn't matter.

Travel cots / portacots

Of course sometimes parents need to be away from home with their baby, in which case a travel cot (also known as a portacot) is needed. A travel cot needs to be as safe as possible and careful consideration should be used when purchasing one. As with cots, a travel cot should be well ventilated.

The BABYBJÖRN travel cot is the only travel cot I am happy to recommend for parents to use in conjunction with my bedding guide. This specific travel cot is made of soft fabric making it snug and cosy, as well as large mesh around the sides for increased airflow. It is the only travel cot I have found that babies do not sweat in. All other travel cots I have tested have caused babies to be in a pool of sweat by the end of their sleep.

Mattresses

What will my baby sleep on?

Often a lot of thought goes into the cot, but little is given to the mattress the baby will sleep on. I believe the mattress is more important than the cot.

The mattress your baby sleeps on should be made from high quality materials, have very good springs and provide good support, just like an adult's mattress, simply smaller.

Just because a cot comes with a mattress does not mean that the mattress is suitable for your baby. Many large baby stores make their own mattresses and put them into the cots, making it seem like theirs are the mattresses that you have to use. This is not the case at all and I recommend doing your own research into the quality of the mattress. One of the best forms of research is to test the mattress

yourself to see if the mattress is firm, comfortable, not lumpy or too soft. If you can feel the springs, so will your baby and she will not sleep well. To test if the mattress is firm enough for your baby or toddler to sleep on do the 'safe hand test'. Press your hand down on the mattress, and when you lift your hand up, check to see if your handprint has been left on the surface. If your handprint is there, the mattress is too soft and not a safe sleeping surface for a baby or toddler.

As some of you will know mid 2014 I was very lucky to be able to bring my 3rd baby boy home from hospital. Ciarán who was born early was just under 3 weeks old when he came home and of course, he needed a place to sleep. I planned for Ciarán to sleep in a mini crib next to our bed. However I was a little disappointed he was not going to be sleeping on a mattress as nice as the ones Darragh and Cillian my older boys had slept on. So to solve this problem the Save Our Sleep cot mattress range was designed. So now my clients, readers and friend's babies can also sleep safely on the perfect mattress.

If you are not sure where to spend your money when it comes to cots and mattresses, I recommend buying a cheaper cot and a better quality mattress. The look of your cot won't matter to your baby, but the quality of the mattress will.

My first baby slept on his cot mattress for two years. Can I still use that mattress for our next baby?

It will depend on the type of mattress you have. If you have bought a mattress from my Save Our Sleep® store or one I endorse from another store, and have always used one of our Save Our Sleep® recommended mattress protectors, then the mattress may be used for more than one child. You will need to ensure that the mattress is clean and has no dips where your older child slept. Most cot mattresses I have seen on the market are of a very poor quality and these get dips in them where a baby or toddler has slept, in which case I would advise a new mattress. I would never use a mattress bought second hand in a cot because you don't know its history.

My baby has reflux and I've been told to tilt the mattress up. Is this right?

Tilting a mattress up is never recommended because of the increased risk of SUDI, including SIDS and fatal sleep accidents. According to SIDS and Kids, there is no evidence to suggest that elevating the mattress will assist with reflux for a back sleeping baby. Placing a pillow in the cot or elevating the cot or mattress is not recommended as it increases the likelihood of a baby slipping down under the bedding and the baby's head becoming covered.

I was planning to use a tea tree mattress, what do you think?

A tea tree mattress is not a mattress I would use for a baby or toddler. Tea tree mattresses are filled with tea tree flakes and this filling starts to settle over time, making it unsafe. A safe sleeping surface for your baby or toddler needs to be firm and pass the safe hand test as described earlier, when no indentation is left after pressing your hand down firmly on the mattress. The appearance of an indentation in a mattress means that it does not provide a safe sleeping surface for a baby or toddler. A tea tree mattress will usually pass a safe hand test when new, but after a bit of use when the tea tree fill starts to settle, the mattress will no longer pass the safe hand test. With the tests I've done, tea tree mattresses become unsafe sleeping surfaces within about three months of use.

Mattress protectors

I've found mattress protectors to be very problematic for babies and parents. Most commonly available mattress protectors cause babies to sweat. This is the case even when they are 100 percent cotton. When a parent sees their baby sweating they assume the baby is too hot and reduce the amount of bedding. The baby actually ends up cold, causing them to roll onto their stomachs in search of warmth and putting them at greater risk of SIDS and SUDI.

Following an exhaustive, worldwide search, The Bambi mattress protector is the best and only mattress protector I recommend, and the only mattress protector that does not cause a baby to sweat. I have found it so good I have had it branded [Save Our Sleep®](#).

Our [Save Our Sleep®](#) mattress protector can be adapted for use with your mini-crib by turning it sideways and wrapping it around the mattress.

A thin cotton bath towel works well as an alternative to a commercially made mattress protector. A towel absorbs moisture quickly, is easy to clean, protects your mattress and does not cause your baby to sweat. A thin cotton towel is a great alternative if you have a tight budget.

Sheets

The material of the sheets you use is more important than how pretty they look. The two types I recommend are cotton and bamboo sheets.

Bamboo sheets are at the higher end of the price scale. They absorb moisture 70 percent faster than cotton and help to protect your mattress from little accidents. You will need more than one set of sheets and the cost can be prohibitive for some. If that's the case, cotton sheets are fine to use. There are many cost effective options available for cotton sheets.

You will need a fitted sheet for covering the mattress and a top sheet to put between your baby and his blankets. I find using this top sheet helps keep everything cleaner. It's far easier to wash a soiled sheet than soiled blankets.

Tip: It is not safe to put a sheepskin under your baby's bedding as this causes the sleep surface to be too soft and increases the risk of SIDS and SUDI.

Blankets

Blankets are usually the part of their baby's bedding that parents get wrong. Parents are often afraid to put too many blankets on their baby because they don't want to overheat their baby, or don't want the blankets to end up over their baby's face. Not enough blankets can cause their baby to be cold, resulting in restless sleep and, in my opinion, a greater risk of SUDI.

There are safe ways to use blankets in a cot, which I have outlined in an easy reference table showing how many blankets you should put on your baby depending on where in the world you are located. It is included at the end of this bedding guide. You can also watch a video to see how I set a cot up with bedding if you visit the 'Videos' page of my website at <http://www.saveoursleep.com/category/videos/> and watch the 'Bedding' video.

There are two important things to know when it comes to blankets on your baby: your baby likes both the warmth and the weight of the blankets.

I know myself, and it's probably the same for a lot of adults, that I love, and sleep better with, heavy bedding on me. Something about the weight makes me feel very secure and comfortable, and it is the same for your baby. He likes the weight on his body just as much as we do. This is why I recommend using what might seem like a high number of blankets. It's not just the warmth, but the weight and security that the blankets provide for your baby.

The warmth of a blanket is measured in TOG. A TOG is a measure of the thermal insulation of a fabric. Doonas and duvets have a TOG rating, for example 1.5 TOG to 4.5 TOG (lightweight) to 15 TOG (extra warm). The doonas, duvets and blankets we have on our beds as adults are usually rated between 12 and 15 TOG. That's a lot! If you remember we are trying to replicate the warmth of the womb, then you'll understand that your baby needs lots of blankets to be warm enough.

Just like the sheets, I recommend either cotton or bamboo blankets for your baby's bedding. Because they are quite light, many cotton or bamboo blankets can be added without your baby getting too hot. It is easier to get both the temperature and the weight correct with bamboo or cotton blankets.

I have found that other types of blankets, such as wool, polyester or fleece, can make babies and toddlers too hot and sweaty, and some are not breathable, which is why I don't recommend them. Please note: **I do not** recommend using a doona, duvet or quilt in a cot.

Let me stress again that this guide is just that, a guide. You should use the amounts of blankets recommended as a starting point and then add or remove layers as necessary for your baby (following the tips in the section 'Too hot or too cold?' on how to tell if your baby is too hot or too cold).

There are maximum amounts of blanket layers that I recommend parents do not exceed. I recommend that the maximum amount of blanket layers that should be used for a baby from newborn to 12 weeks of age, in a cot or mini-crib, is 12. For a baby 12 weeks and over in a cot or mini-crib, the maximum is 15. For a baby sleeping in a bassinet from newborn to 12 weeks of age the maximum amount of blanket layers that I recommend is 10, and from 12 weeks old in a bassinet the maximum is 12.

Your recommendation seems like a lot of blankets! Surely that's too many, and one or two is enough?

Cotton and bamboo blankets have a low TOG, therefore you need many of them to provide the required amount of warmth for your baby. It may seem like a lot, but I assure you it is not. Just one or two will result in a cold baby who, as we know, will then try to roll to get warmth. Building up the layers of blankets on your baby will also provide the weight that your baby loves to feel secure.

CASE STUDY #1: Connor's story

My friend Clare came to me with her beautiful baby boy Connor. Connor was ten weeks old, and Clare needed some help.

Connor had previously been a content and happy baby. Clare had been implementing my sleep schedule for babies his age, and Connor had been going extremely well. He was self-settling, feeding well and was generally a very happy baby.

That was however, until two weeks ago when Connor had his immunisation needles. Clare said that ever since then Connor had been very unsettled. Connor had started waking frequently through the night. During the day Connor was sleeping for short periods of time and then waking up. Clare said she had been trying to get Connor back into his routine but that it wasn't working. After two weeks of this Clare was exhausted.

Clare had concluded that the immunisation needles had caused Connor to become unsettled and was asking me what she could do to get him sleeping well again.

I visited Clare in her home to chat with her and assess the situation to see if I could help. When I looked in Connor's cot I noticed there was only one blanket in there. I asked Clare if this was what she'd been using for Connor and she said she had. Instantly I knew what the problem was. Connor was cold. He was waking up frequently because he wasn't being kept warm enough.

Clare had previously been following my recommendation for the amount of blankets to use for a baby. I asked her why she had reduced the amount. Clare said that she had mentioned the amount of blankets to her health nurse who had told her that it was too many and to take all of them out but one. Clare had followed the nurse's instruction and ever since Connor had been unsettled. Clare had thought it had been because of the immunisation when in actual fact it was the change in the number of blankets she'd been using that was causing Connor to be unsettled.

Once we set the cot up with the correct amount of blankets Connor went down for his next sleep without any problems. He was now warm and slept soundly. Connor went back to following my sleep schedule for babies his age. Clare was hugely relieved and was able to get some sleep herself.

Clothing your baby

The cot is all ready, and it's time to put your baby in. But what should he be wearing? A bodysuit? A babygro? A safe baby sleep bag? This section of the guide is designed to educate you about dressing your baby in for sleep, and is separated according to different age groups. Always keep in mind when dressing your baby for bed that you want to ensure your baby is warm enough, just like they were while in the womb.

Below is a reference list of clothing items I will refer to when recommending the best way to dress your baby. This list will describe exactly what these clothing items are and the alternative names they can be known by.

Bodysuit

A bodysuit has snap buttons that fasten between your baby's legs. They can have no sleeves, short sleeves or long sleeves. When you stop wrapping your baby I recommend you start to use long sleeved bodysuits. Bodysuits are meant as underwear for your baby.



Babygro

A full suit with long arms and long legs, with or without covered feet. They can be fastened with either a zip or press-studs. They sometimes have flaps that can be folded over your baby's hands. A babygro can also be known as a onesie, all in one, or jumpsuit.

Bundler

A full suit with an open end at the feet. A bundler is very similar to a babygro. The end is often much longer than your baby's legs, meaning it can be folded under your baby. The length also means your baby will get more wear out of a bundler as she grows because you just fold up less and less material under your baby. A bundler is also ideal for middle of the night nappy changes. A bundler can also be known as a nightie. Where I refer to a babygro in the list below, please note you can use a babygro or a bundler.



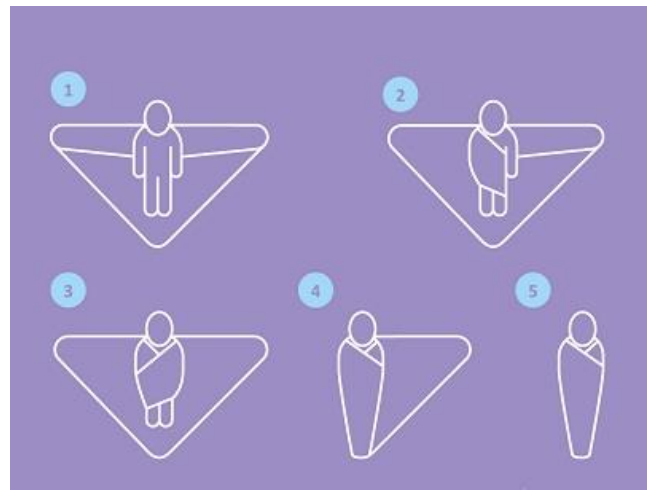


Safe baby sleep bag

Designed to assist in keeping your baby warm when used with other clothing and bedding such as blankets. Safe sleep bags help to delay your baby from rolling from his back to his tummy because they restrict your baby's movement as well as keeping your baby warm. A safe baby sleep bag was formally known as a baby sleeping bag and should not be confused with a sleeping bag used for outdoor camping purposes. Safe sleep bags come in different TOG ratings that should be noted when purchasing for your baby.

Doublewrap

Used to keep your baby wrapped and secure. Also known as a 'wrap in a wrap', a Doublewrap allows your baby's hips to move freely. These wraps differ from a blanket or a muslin wrap. A Doublewrap is made from a stretch fabric, allowing your baby to have some movement while staying wrapped.



Dressing your baby

Please be mindful that, though this is a recommendation based on what I've found works best when dressing your baby for bed, your specific region and climate need to be considered also. The reference table at the end of this guide will assist you with this.

Birth to eight weeks

In the early weeks, keeping your baby very warm is extremely important. These weeks are part of the fourth trimester I mentioned previously, so it's important your baby is warm enough, just like they were in the womb.

From birth until eight weeks I recommend your baby be dressed in:

A short sleeved or sleeveless bodysuit, a babygro or bundler, and a Doublewrap.

There is no need to add more than this as the extra warmth is provided to your baby from the blankets that will be placed over him. If I have not mentioned an item of clothing then I do not

recommend dressing your baby in it for bed. Never allow your baby to wear a hat to bed. If you have come from outside to inside, ensure you remove the hat.

My baby hates being wrapped. Can I skip the Doublewrap?

A baby who is warm, well-fed and not overtired does not hate being wrapped. Babies actually really love it. If your baby is showing resistance to being wrapped it will be because of another reason. I would encourage you to look for what the problem might be. I have really only found that overtired babies resist being wrapped.

Eight weeks and older

When your baby is around eight weeks of age she has the ability to sleep more deeply. This deeper sleep also means that her body temperature drops, meaning that her bedding needs to be increased to ensure she is warm enough. That's why at this stage I recommend the introduction of a safe baby sleep bag.

The safe baby sleep bag should be used in conjunction with additional sleepwear and bedding, not as an alternative. Blankets are still needed to keep your baby warm enough. When choosing a safe sleep bag, pay attention to the TOG rating. Most safe baby sleep bags are rated between 0.5 TOG and 2.5 TOG, meaning they are very lightweight. Using a lightweight safe sleep bag without the assistance of blankets will result in your baby being cold or insecure.

From eight weeks onwards I suggest you dress your baby in:

A bodysuit, a babygro or a bundler, a safe sleep bag and a Doublewrap.

I recommend starting to use the safe sleep bag at this young age because its introduction won't disturb the baby at this point. Introducing the safe sleep bag later than this can make for a difficult transition. The safe sleep bag should be placed **under** the Doublewrap.

I've been told to dress my baby in one more layer than I sleep in. Is this the case?

Dress your baby in appropriate clothing and then provide extra warmth with blankets. It's not appropriate to apply the same logic to adults and babies. Adults tend to wear very little clothing to bed and to make up for their light clothing with bedding that has a very high tog rating. Often we have a warm partner sleeping beside us providing warmth as well, and we are able to regulate our temperatures better than babies.

The average TOG rating of a doona or duvet for an adult in Australia is 15. If you look closely at my bedding reference table you will find that the TOG I am suggesting you put over your baby is lower than the TOG most adults sleep under. The blankets I recommend for your baby have a TOG rating of 0.6, and most cotton blankets available on the market have a tog rating of 0.2. Much less than the 15 TOG of adult doonas and duvets! You would need approximately 75 of the blankets I recommend to be equal to an adult doona or duvet. So while it might seem like I am recommending a high number of blankets to sleep your baby under, they actually make up a lower tog rating than most adult bedding.

When do I stop wrapping my baby?

To know when to stop wrapping your baby you need to look for signs that your baby is becoming able to roll while wrapped. This can be as late as 10 months. You are not looking for when your baby is just able to roll. He may be able to roll freely while he is awake, but show no signs of being able to roll when wrapped and placed in bed. Only when your baby shows signs of being able to roll while he is wrapped, **normally around eight to 10 months**, do you need to stop wrapping him.

When your baby is no longer swaddled for sleep I recommend you use a long sleeved bodysuit.

18 months and older

At around 18 months babies get better at controlling their own body temperature while they are sleeping and may not require quite as much bedding.

You will only need to change your baby's bedding if he starts to show signs of being too warm. I recommend observing your toddler or baby for signs of being too warm while he is sleeping (such as sweating). Then you can adjust his bedding layers as necessary. If your baby is starting to have a sweaty or wet clothing or skin (check their back, tummy and back of their neck), then this is a sign that you should remove some layers of blankets.

Dressing safely for sleep

Safe baby sleep bags

Safe baby sleep bags are an essential part of your baby's clothing to ensure he is warm and safe for all sleeps. As previously mentioned, I recommend the use of cotton or bamboo blankets in conjunction with your toddler's sleep bag in a cot or with a duvet if your toddler has made the transition to a big bed.

When I refer to sleep bags, I am talking about the safe sleep bags recommended on my website. In my opinion, they are the safest sleep bag on the market in Australia. As safety and the wellbeing of babies and children is my main priority, I have looked into all other brands and new products that are on the market. I can happily say none of them come close to the safe quality of those I recommend.

I am very excited to say that in 2013 I launched my very own brand of [Save Our Sleep®](#) safe sleep bags, taking all the good points from the safe sleep bags on the market and making what I believe to be the safest available.

I do not recommend that your baby wear more than two layers under a safe sleep bag. Instead extra warmth should be provided to your baby with bamboo or cotton blankets. Some safe sleep bag manufacturers advise to dress your baby in extra layers but I've found this can be extremely problematic.

For example, if you check your baby at night and discover he feels too hot, it can be very difficult to remove extra layers of clothing from under the safe sleep bag. You may not want to risk waking him to remove the extra clothing. You and I would like to think we would put safety first, but it is important to remember that some nights we might feel too tired to risk waking a sleeping baby or toddler. If your baby is dressed as I recommend, with layers of blankets used for extra warmth, it is quite simple to remove a blanket and not wake your sleeping baby.

On the flipside, if you found your toddler was too cold because he was not wearing enough layers under his safe sleep bag you might just grab the nearest thing, such as a quilt or a polyester blanket, and throw it over him. A safer approach is to have the correct safe bedding on hand, and to educate other people who are around your child at sleep times about how to put him to bed safely.

There can be many unsafe elements to a sleep bag. In many years of working with sleep bags I've seen zips and poppers come off, neck and arm holes that are too big (allowing babies to slip into them

and climb out) and sleep bags with Velcro on them (allowing the sleep bag to become attached to the mattress). I have experienced none of these problems with the safe sleep bags I currently recommend, or my own range.

I often find that parents move their toddler out of a safe sleep bag too soon. I believe that your toddler should remain in a safe sleep bag until at least six months after he has made the transition to a big bed. For boys this means continuing to use a safe sleep bag until around three and a half years of age and for girls, around three years of age. However, some toddlers and children are happy to continue sleeping in a safe sleep bag until six or seven years of age and I have no problem with this. Keeping your child in his safe sleep bag when moving him to his big bed helps things to stay as familiar as possible in the transition period. When you make the transition to a big bed you will probably start using a duvet, so the safe sleep bag will also help to keep your toddler warmer while he is learning to sleep in this new environment, where covers and sheets may get kicked or fall off the bed in the early stages.

Safe sleep bag tips:

- Never use a safe sleep bag made from a stretch material such as jersey
- Never use a safe sleep bag with a zip down the side — make sure the safe sleep bag has a front zip that zips downwards to close
- Never use a safe sleep bag with poppers or buttons on the shoulders
- Never tuck your baby's safe sleep bag in under the cot mattress because this will restrict your baby's movement and is dangerous
- Before using a safe sleep bag, make sure it has fitted neck and armholes and check that your baby cannot slip into the bag
- If the sleep bag is too long for your baby, tuck the bottom under your baby's feet and legs, not over them, as this will risk making your baby too warm

To view the safest range of sleeping bags on the market, please visit the [Save Our Sleep® online store at http://shop.saveoursleep.com.au/ecms/default.asp](http://shop.saveoursleep.com.au/ecms/default.asp).

Wraps/swaddles with zips

I do not recommend ever using a wrap with a zip on it, or any type of swaddle or wrap where your baby's arms are able to move. These wraps allow your baby to use her arms to roll onto her tummy, where she may get stuck, putting her at high risk of SUDI if she becomes trapped face down.

It is very important to use a safe wrap to help keep your baby warm and to delay your baby rolling from her back to her tummy. Sleeping your baby on her back is one of the most important factors in keeping your baby safe from SIDS and SUDI. Another risk with zip wraps is that the zip can slip down and your baby can slide into the wrap and become trapped.

Putting your baby to bed

Now that your baby is dressed and his cot is ready, it is time to put him to bed. Your baby should always be placed on his back, down one end of the cot with his feet nearly touching the slats. I recommend that you dress your baby as I've advised in the 'Clothing your baby' section above and then you layer either bamboo or cotton cellular blankets on top of him. The number of blankets depends on the room temperature and the climate you live in. You can find this information in the reference tables at the end of this guide.

My baby really loves sleeping on his tummy. Why can't I leave him there? He looks so cute!

Your baby may love sleeping on his tummy, but it is not safe. The reason he loves being on his tummy could be related to a few things. Firstly, he might be cold. Remember a cold baby will seek warmth, and will often do this by rolling on to his tummy, tucking his hands under his chest and tucking his knees in. This results in a very cute sleeping baby, but an unsafe one. If your baby is warm enough, he will not roll into this position. Secondly, when a baby sleeps on his tummy, the mattress places pressure on his stomach, making him feel full. If you are using enough blankets, his weight will provide that pressure on his tummy, ensuring he still feels full.

Room temperature

I believe you should keep your baby's room at a comfortable temperature all night. I suggest having your baby's room cooled to 22 degrees Celsius in summer (if you are using air conditioning), or warmed to 18–20 degrees Celsius in winter. These temperatures depend on where you live, so please check the reference tables at the end of this guide for location-specific information. If you do not have hydronic heating, I suggest you use an oil-filled column heater or wall panel heater. I do not advise using ducted heating in your baby's room due to the dust it blows around.

You can use a thermometer placed in your baby's room, placed on a stool or a shelf at mattress height near the cot or crib but safely out of reach from your baby or toddler.

I've tried several thermometers and they all give a different reading. What should I do?

Choose one thermometer and stick with it. There can be variances between brands that are leading to your confusion. Choose one, and get rid of the others. Then you know you are warming the room to a consistent temperature.

Cocooning

I no longer recommend tucking blankets in for several reasons. Firstly, there is still space for air between your baby's sides and the blankets that will make your baby cold. Secondly, if a cold baby rolls onto her tummy and then slips down under the tucked in blankets, she can get stuck face down. And thirdly, if your baby happens to slip down under the blankets, the blankets may be tucked too tightly for her to free herself.

Instead, I recommend a technique known as cocooning, where you lay the blankets over your baby (ensuring her face is not covered) and push them in at her sides to make her feel warm and secure. If your baby rolls onto her tummy, the blankets will move with her, rather than trapping her face down in the mattress. She will be able to lift her head and the blankets up because the blankets are not tucked in tightly.

An additional benefit of cocooning is that for an older baby or toddler, if she moves slightly in her sleep, the bedding will move with her, keeping her covered and warm, and helping to keep her in the safe back sleeping position for as long as possible.

Too hot or too cold?

You still need to observe your baby and adjust the bedding if your baby appears too hot or cold.

Signs of a baby who is too hot might include:

- Waking and moaning
- Having a sweaty back, tummy or back of the neck
- Having sweaty or wet clothes
- Shallow and / or rapid breathing

Signs of a baby who is too cold might include:

- Moving all around the cot
- Movement resulting in banging the side of the cot
- Movement resulting in limbs poking through the slats
- Never lying still
- Rolling onto her tummy
- Catnapping during the day
- Waking from 4am (but more often 5am)
- Continuing to need night feeds after four months of age

Bedding for your sick baby

If your baby is ill, with a fever or showing signs of illness, it is very important that you reduce the amount of bedding you use on him. The risk of overheating, and it's implications in SIDS, has been shown to be much greater when a baby is unwell.

If your baby has a fever I recommend:

- Dropping down a TOG in the safe sleep bag you use; for example, if you normally use a 2.5 TOG safe sleep bag then change to a 1.0 tog. If you normally use a 1.0 TOG then change to a 0.5 TOG
- A wrap, if you are still wrapping your baby
- No more than two layers of either cotton or bamboo blankets

If your baby is less than eight weeks old I recommend you only dress him in a bodysuit and remove the babygro.

When your baby is unwell and does not usually sleep in cot in your room, I recommend moving yourself to sleep in your baby's room so you can be close to him. Alternatively, you could use a mini-crib placed next to your bed (which at the lowest settings can be used by a toddler as a sometimes bed).

If your baby has a diagnosed medical condition I recommend you consult your child's health care professional regarding appropriate bedding.

Tummy-sleeping babies

The safest position for your baby or toddler to sleep is on his back.

However, if you have followed my bedding guide, you have tried adding additional layers up to the maximums listed in the tables at the end of this guide, your baby is over one year of age and continues to roll to his tummy, then it is very important that you **do not** follow the tables in my guide.

Studies have shown that heat loss in tummy-sleeping babies is 60 percent less than for non-tummy-sleeping babies with the same insulation values for clothing and bedding. Therefore if you have decided to risk your baby sleeping on his tummy I recommend you follow my recommendations for clothing, safe sleep bags and sheets but use a **maximum of two layers** of blankets on your baby.

Never wrap/swaddle a tummy-sleeping baby.

CASE STUDY #2: Rylen's story

I remember visiting a little boy called Rylen because his parents were concerned about how restlessly he was sleeping at night, and how early he was waking in the morning. At the time, Rylen was nine months old and was on my sleep routine for his age and didn't have any settling problems.

Rylen would go to bed at 7pm and get himself to sleep in a few minutes. But come midnight he would start to move about the cot, banging his head and often getting his arms stuck through the cot bars. This unsettled sleep would go on all night until 5am when Rylen would wake up and not be able to get back to sleep. Rylen's parents, Claire and John, didn't mind starting their day at 5am but were worried about his restless nights. They asked me to come and visit to help Rylen sleep more soundly.

One of the first things I did when I arrived at their home was to look at where Rylen slept and what he wore to bed. I saw that Rylen's cot had cot bumpers on it. I explained to Claire and John that cot bumpers were not recommended by SIDS researchers and suggested we remove them. I also pointed out that I suspected that Rylen was cold and that once we had him warmer at night he would not move about the cot so they would have no need for the unsafe cot bumpers.

What led me to suspect Rylen was cold was that I noticed there was no bedding in Rylen's cot or around his room. When I asked why there was no bedding in the cot, Claire and John explained that they had been told bedding was unsafe and to use a sleeping bag as a safe alternative to bedding. I was shocked and explained that, in my opinion, this was actually making Rylen's sleeping environment unsafe rather than safe.

I explained to Claire and John that since SIDS researchers agreed the safest way for a baby to sleep was on his back, I have always advised parents to put their babies in a safe baby sleep bag. But I advise safe sleep bags are used with bedding, not as an alternative.

I believe safe sleep bags are a great piece of clothing and help keep babies warm at night, which in return stops them rolling and moving all over their cot. Safe sleep bags keep babies warm, which stops them trying to roll to their tummies to warm up. They also stop babies kicking their bedding loose, and they help babies to feel safe and secure — some babies even use them as a comforter when going to sleep.

I explained that when Claire and John were warned not to overheat Rylen (as it could be a factor relating to SIDS), it did not mean they needed to have him so cold at night that they were causing the opposite — under heating. In my opinion, having a baby who is cold at night is just as dangerous, or maybe even more dangerous than overheating him. A baby who is cold will roll to his tummy as soon as he is physically able and, once on his tummy, will sleep with his face buried in the mattress, banging his little head and getting his arms and legs stuck through the bars. I believe the reason for Rylen's restless nights was that he was feeling cold and that his rolling on to his tummy and moving all around his cot was because he was trying to find a warmer spot to sleep.

So, that night we took the cot bumpers out of Rylen's cot and dressed him in a bodysuit, a babygro, a 2.5 TOG Save Our Sleep® recommended safe sleep bag, a sheet and four bamboo blankets (popping a fifth one on last thing before we all went to bed for the night). Rylen went to bed on the 7pm bus and, to his mummy and daddy's relief, he didn't move all night and slept until we woke him, just before 7am.

A Final Word

The main points you should remember when getting your baby ready for bed are that a warm and well-fed baby will sleep well. If your baby is unsettled it is usually because they are cold and / or hungry, and these two reasons should be the first things you look at.

I hope this guide has given you confidence when it comes to your baby's bedding. If you have further questions please log on to the [Save Our Sleep® website](http://www.saveoursleep.com) for further information, news and updates.

Safe Bedding Tables

The tables below name the places where most of my clients, readers and friends live. If your home is not listed please do not worry. You should pick the closest place to you that is listed.

The tables outline the recommended clothing and bedding you should use for your baby. The tables have been based on the safe sleep bags, wraps and blankets I recommend which you can view in my online store and purchase from us or any of the stores on our recommended retailers list. If you are using alternative sleep bags or bedding you may need to adjust the layers, taking into account the signs of a cold or hot baby.

Using the tables, you will still need to watch your baby and adjust the bedding if your baby appears too hot or cold. Use the section 'Too hot or too cold' above to help recognise whether your baby is too hot or cold. Please note the chart is giving you a starting point and maximum blankets needed.

*However this changes to less for babies sleeping in a basinet please see the end of page 7 for more details.

The Save Our Sleep® bedding guide for a baby who is newborn to eight weeks and swaddled for sleep. I believe you should swaddle your baby until he shows signs of trying to roll swaddled.

Tasmania, Victoria, ACT, South Australia, lower parts of WA and New Zealand South Island:

Room temp. (°C)	Bodysuit	Babygro	Wrap in a Wrap	Sheet folded in 2	Day Blanket Layers	Night Blanket Layers *
20	✓	✓	✓	✓	5-10	6-12
22	✓	✓	✓	✓	4-10	5-12
24	✓	✓	✓	✓	3-10	4-12
26	✓	✓	✓	✓	2-10	3-12
28	✓	✓	✓	✓	1-10	2-12
30	✗	✓	✓	✓	1-10	2-12
32	✓	✗	✓	✓	1-10	2-12
34	✗	✗	✓	✓	1-10	2-12

New South Wales, Central WA and New Zealand North Island:

Room temp. (°C)	Bodysuit	Babygro	Wrap in a wrap	Sheet folded in 2	Day Blanket layers	Night Blanket layers
20	✓	✓	✓	✓	4-10	5-12
22	✓	✓	✓	✓	3-10	4-12
24	✓	✓	✓	✓	2-10	3-12
26	✓	✓	✓	✓	1-10	2-12
28	✗	✓	✓	✓	1-10	2-12
30	✓	✗	✓	✓	1-10	2-12
32	✗	✗	✓	✓	1-10	2-12
34	✗	✗	✓	✓	0-10	1-12

London, Dublin, Singapore, Queensland, The Northern Territory and the top end of WA:

Room temp. (°C)	Bodysuit	Babygro	Wrap in a wrap	Sheet folded in 2	Day Blanket layers	Night Blanket layers
18	✓	✓	✓	✓	2-10	4-12
20	✓	✓	✓	✓	2-10	3-12
22	✓	✓	✓	✓	1-10	2-12
24	✗	✓	✓	✓	1-8	2-10
26	✓	✗	✓	✓	1-8	2-10
28	✗	✗	✓	✓	1-8	2-10
30	✗	✗	✓	✓	0-8	1-10
32	✗	✗	✓	✓	0-8 fan on	0-10 no fan

The Save Our Sleep® bedding guide for a baby who is over eight weeks and swaddled for sleep. I believe you should swaddle your baby until he shows signs of trying to roll swaddled.

Tasmania, Victoria, ACT, South Australia, lower parts of WA and New Zealand South Island:

Room temp. (°C)	Bodysuit	Babygro	1.0 TOG Safe Sleeping Bag	Wrap in a wrap	Sheet folded in 2	Day Blanket layers	Night Blanket layers
20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5-15	6-15
22	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	4-14	5-15
24	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3-12	4-15
26	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2-12	3-15
28	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1-12	2-15
30	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	1-12	2-15
32	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	1-12	2-15
34	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	1-12	2-15

New South Wales, Central WA and New Zealand North Island:

Room temp. (°C)	Bodysuit	Babygro	1.0 TOG Safe Sleeping Bag	Wrap in a wrap	Sheet folded in 2	Day Blanket layers	Night Blanket layers
20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	4-14	5-15
22	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3-12	4-14
24	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2-12	3-14
26	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1-12	2-14
28	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	1-12	2-14
30	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	1-10	2-12
32	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	1-10	2-12
34	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	0-8	1-10

London, Dublin, Singapore, Queensland, The Northern Territory and the top end of WA:

Room temp. (°C)	Bodysuit	Babygro	1.0 TOG Safe Sleeping Bag	Wrap in a wrap	Sheet folded in 2	Day Blanket layers	Night Blanket layers
18	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	3-10	4-12
20	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	2-10	3-12
22	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1-10	2-12
24	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	1-8	2-10
26	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	1-8	2-10
28	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	1-6	2-8
30	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	0-6	1-8
32	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	0 and fan	0 No fan

The Save Our Sleep® bedding guide for a baby who is not swaddled for sleep.
Tasmania, Victoria, ACT, South Australia, lower parts of WA and New Zealand South Island:

Room temp. (°C)	Bodysuit Long sleeved	Babygro	1.0 TOG Safe Sleeping Bag	2.5 TOG Safe Sleeping Bag	Sheet folded in 2	Day Blanket layers	Night Blanket layers
20	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	5-14	6-15
22	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	4-14	5-15
24	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	3-14	4-15
26	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	2-14	3-15
28	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	1-14	2-15
30	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	1-14	2-15
32	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	1-14	2-15
34	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	1-14	2-15

New South Wales, Central WA and New Zealand North Island:

Room temp. (°C)	Bodysuit Long sleeved	Babygro	1.0 TOG Safe Sleeping Bag	2.5 TOG Safe Sleeping Bag	Sheet folded in 2	Day Blanket layers	Night Blanket layers
20	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	4-14	5-15
22	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	3-14	4-15
24	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	2-14	3-15
26	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	1-14	2-15
28	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	1-12	2-15
30	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	1-12	2-15
32	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	1-12	2-15
34	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	0-12	0-14

London, Dublin, Singapore, Queensland, The Northern Territory and the top end of WA:

Room temp. (°C)	Bodysuit Long sleeved	Babygro	1.0 TOG Safe Sleeping Bag	2.5 TOG Safe Sleeping Bag	Sheet folded in 2	Day Blanket layers	Night Blanket layers
18	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	3-10	4-12
20	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	2-10	3-12
22	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	1-10	2-12
24	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	1-8	2-10
26	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	1-8	2-10
28	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	1-6	2-8
30	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	0-6	0-8
32	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	0 Fan on	0 No fan