**If your baby is **unwell, **seek advice promptly**

Doctors and young children often have minor illnesses which do not need to worry about. Make sure your baby drinks plenty of fluids and is not too hot.

It may be difficult to judge whether an illness is more serious requiring medical attention. If your baby has any of the following symptoms there may be a serious illness:

- A high pitched or weak cry, is less responsive, is much less active or more floppy than usual
- Looks very pale all over, grunts with each breath, has obvious dips in the upper tummy or between the ribs as he or she breathes
- Takes less than a third of usual fluids, passes much less urine than usual, vomits green fluids, or passes blood in the nappy. Infants should have at least three wet nappies per day (24 hour period)
- Has a high fever with sweating

**Seek medical advice early and quickly**

If you have any queries about the information in this leaflet, or about Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) risk factors, contact your General Practitioner, Public Health Nurse or Health Centre.

Irish Sudden Infant Death Association
Carrick House
4 North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7
Telephone: (01) 873 2711
Website: [www.isda.ie](http://www.isda.ie)

**Caring for your Child**

A few simple ways to ensure better health for your child

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**Recommended Childhood Immunisation Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Immunisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth - 1 month</td>
<td>BCG (Usually in maternity hospitals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>Diphtheria, Tetanus, Whooping Cough*, Hib, Inactivated Polio (Gin-1) Meningococcal C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>Diphtheria, Tetanus, Whooping Cough*, Hib, Inactivated Polio (Gin-1) Meningococcal C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Diphtheria, Tetanus, Whooping Cough*, Hib, Inactivated Polio (Gin-1) Meningococcal C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-15 months</td>
<td>Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR) Hib*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8 years</td>
<td>Diphtheria, Tetanus, Whooping Cough*, Inactivated Polio (Gin-1) Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-12 years</td>
<td>Measles/Mumps/Rubella (MMR) - omit if 2 previous doses have been given</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14 years</td>
<td>SCD (Interval of 4 weeks after MMR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-14 years</td>
<td>Tetanus/Diphtheria (Td) Low dose</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Pertussis
Smoke Free Zone for Children

Smoking during pregnancy adversely affects your baby's health. Smoking is known to increase the risk of stillbirth and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Pregnant women who smoke are more likely to deliver babies who are premature and small in weight and size. If a woman continues to smoke until delivery, her baby will have a higher risk of developing respiratory disorders such as bronchitis and pneumonia.

Avoid smoking around children. Mothers, children, children of friends, and other children alike are affected by second-hand smoke. Mothers exposed to smoke have a higher risk of developing respiratory disorders such as bronchitis and pneumonia.

As these risks to your child's health increase with the number of cigarettes smoked, each day is at least 300 cigarettes in your home. Avoid the temptation to take your child out into smoke-filled areas.

Infant’s Sleeping Environment

Face Up, Face Free

The best position for infants to sleep is on their backs. There is no evidence that infants might be sick and choke when lying on their backs. Occasionally, babies who require special care or have a particular medical problem need to be nursed otherwise. Your doctor, midwife or nurse will explain the reasons why.

If your baby has slept on his/ her tummy, he/she may not wake up as easily as a baby who has slept on his back. Babies can turn over and move around the bed. Always place them to sleep on their back. Infants should be encouraged to continue to sleep in the same position as they sleep in bed, ensuring that the covers cannot slip over the baby's head.

When sleeping, babies can overheat because of too much bedding, clothing or because the room is too hot. To check how warm your baby is, feel his/her tummy. If your baby's tummy feels hot, or if the baby is sweating anywhere, lie or she is too warm. Do not be afraid to use a fan to cool down the baby.

Feeding

Breastfeeding is the natural and best way to feed your baby. Breast milk contains all the nutrients your baby needs for growth and development. It is not advisable to give cow's milk, fruit juices, dairy products or other solid foods to infants under 1 year. Suitable nutritious semi-solid or solid foods should be introduced by 6 months. First foods should be pureed and of a soft consistency without lumps and should be introduced one at a time, leaving a few days before the addition of each new food. Breastfed babies can be introduced to solid foods at the same time. You can use a little milked food to formula to make food more familiar. Use a medium-sized spoon and an open-ended syringe. Feeding bottles should not be left with babies at any time or especially overnight.

Infants in Cars and Vans

Always make sure your child is safely restrained in the car seat. Do not allow your child to hold the baby in your arms. The safest seat for a small baby is a rearward-facing car seat. Babies should not be placed in a car seat until about 6 months. Switch to a forward-facing car seat when your baby reaches about 1 year (18 kg). If your baby is at risk of choking, always place the cover on and secure the car seat with a suitable strap. Your baby should NEVER be left in a specially designed rearward-facing baby car seat.

Alcohol and Drug Intake during Pregnancy

Excessive drinking of alcohol during pregnancy is not recommended. The less you drink the better it is for you and the baby. Avoid all alcoholic drinks, and cut down drinking if at all possible. Try to cut down the intake of alcohol at all times. Alcohol is known to increase the risk of SIDS, although some evidence indicates that alcohol should not be avoided.

Taking drugs during pregnancy is not recommended unless prescribed by your doctor.

If you want your baby to sleep in bed with you or with another child consider the following:

- Bed sharing is not advisable if you smoke, have drunk alcohol or taken other drugs, are excessively tired or if your baby is less than 16 weeks of age.
- Ensure that your baby cannot:
  - slip under the bedding, duvet, pillows or an adult
  - get wedged between the bed and an adult or wall
  - fall out of the bed

It is fine to take your baby into bed for feeding or playing. It is recommended that infants do not spend the entire duration of their sleeping period in an adult bed especially if the parents smoke.

Pillows (infant's or adult's) should not be used in your infant's sleeping area.

During the early years of your child's life there are a number of recommended guidelines and things you can do that will improve your child's general health and in some cases help reduce the risk of illness and even death.