Summary safer infant sleep

Safer sleep messages

Place infant in a safe sleep position in a safe sleep environment

- Place infant on their back for every sleep
- Keep head and face uncovered
- Smoke free before and after birth
- Keep sleep space clear for every sleep
- Safe sleep place in same room as caregiver for first 6-12 months
- · Breastfeeding is recommended

Promote safer sleeping

- · Learn about the combined effect of infant and environmental vulnerabilities
- · Reduce risk factors in infant's sleep environment
- Use a risk minimisation approach
- Use 'gist' messaging to assist caregiver understanding and recall

Communicating with caregivers

Offer a strengths-based partnership approach

- Go beyond information giving and consider infant vulnerabilities, and caregivers' experiences, circumstances and perspectives
- Involve the wider circle of caregivers in planning and support
- Acknowledge complexities of family life and support caregivers with planning for safety at every sleep
- Regardless of perceived risk, caregivers benefit from informed and ongoing conversations
- Have conversations repeatedly at multiple time points, starting before 3rd trimester
- · At each conversation, facilitate discussion and informed decision making

Mechanisms of airway protection

Most SUDI associated with environmental factors that compromise infant airway

- · Nose and mouth obstruction (pillows, doonas, soft bedding, overlaying)
- Positioning causing airway obstruction (chin to chest position)
- Chest compression inhibiting breathing (sofas, wedging, entrapment, overlaying)
- Reduced or impaired arousal (exposure to smoke, prone position, over heating)
- Airway compromised at the neck (strangulation ties, cords, clothing)

Understanding airway protection mechanisms builds trust in messages

- · Be familiar with mechanisms of airway protection and risk
- Provide information about airway protection to increase caregiver understanding of why safer sleep messages are important and how to minimise risk
- Easier to breathe Safer to sleep

Specific strategies for safer infant sleep

Use in the context of safer sleep messages, communicating with caregivers and mechanisms of airway protection

- Relevant to family circumstances, values, cultural beliefs, and infant sleep plans
- · Avoid lists of do's and don'ts,
- Aim for understanding of the 'why and how' of safer sleep messages so parents can apply to all infant sleep situations
- Refer to QCG Safer infant sleep guideline for specific strategies and advice on infant positioning, sleep environment, shared sleeping and infants with medical conditions

Queensland Clinical Guideline. Safer infant sleep. Flowchart: F22.71-1-V1-R27



