

## **Are popular fleece blankets used for newborns linked to SIDS?**

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**Background:** Safe-sleeping advice is part of the role of the paediatric team; and it is thought that thermal stress and overheating is linked to SIDS. However, little is known about the TOG rating of different blankets. Fleece blankets are an increasingly popular type of baby blanket which retains warmth.

**Objectives:** During a child death review an infant with SIDS had been wrapped in a fleece blanket. This prompted a literature review surrounding fleece blankets as they are commonly used to wrap sleeping infants.

**Methods:** A literature review was undertaken and review of advice available to parents on popular internet forums.

**Results:** Fleece fibre is a polyester synthetic fibre known for its thermal ability, resistance to wear and rapid drying capabilities. It appeals to parents as an eco-friendly, soft and easily washable material. Due to construction the fabric holds pockets of warm air whilst being light-weight. Originally used for those venturing to extreme conditions including mountaineering or astronauts to space it is now used in a variety of forms as baby blankets. Given the thin nature of the material it may be deceptive in its thermal insulation properties. The literature review found no published evidence linking fleece blankets and SIDS. Some safe-sleeping websites advised not to use fleece blankets for infants, however, there were many prominent advertisements for baby fleece blankets available to purchase.

**Conclusions:** Heavily wrapping infants may be linked in SIDS. Parents are commonly using fleece blankets – a material known for its thermal ability. The total thermal insulation is most important, this is made up of the covering, mattress, head covering and room temperature. Fleece blankets alone make up one aspect of this. It cannot therefore be concluded from the current evidence that fleece blankets contribute to SIDS, however that does not mean there is evidence they are safe.

### **Biography**

Emily Helliwell is a Paediatric Registrar working Bristol and Bath. She qualified from Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry in 2011 and has worked in London, Australia and now the South West of England. Emily has an interest in preventative medicine through health promotion to young people and their families.