

Cots

Babies probably spend more time in cots than anywhere else, so it's important their cots are safe.


Many cot-related injuries involve children falling while trying to climb out of the cot. Children are also injured when components of the cot fail e.g. the side falls down, the base falls out, or the screws come loose.

Serious injury or death can occur when the child's head and upper body are caught in gaps. There is a higher chance of this occurring in older cots or cots which have been modified. Other injuries can occur when fingers get caught in holes or openings between 5-12mm; limbs lodge in gaps between 30-50mm and heads get stuck in gaps over 95mm.

Household cots must legally comply with the safety requirements of Australian New Zealand Standard *AS/NZS 2172:2003 Cots for household use—Safety requirements*.

Requirement for cots in day nurseries, hospital and institutions are given in *AS/NZS 2130:1998 Cots for day nursery, hospital and institutional use—Safety requirements*.

Cots must be safely designed and constructed so as not to have climb-out or fall-out hazards, strangulation hazards, head, arm or leg entrapment hazards, or cause injury to fingers and toes. These requirements do not permit gaps where a child could become trapped or protrusions that could cause a child's clothing to snag.



When choosing a cot it is important to make sure that it will be a safe place for your child.

Buying Guide

Make sure the cot has an Australian Standard's sticker stating that it complies with the mandatory product safety standard.



Ensure that the basic design of the vertical rails has safe gaps not less than 50mm and not more than 95mm.

Always make sure the mattress fits snugly to within 20mm at the sides and the ends of the cot - a gap no more than your index finger.

Ensure a minimum height of 500mm from the top of the mattress to the top of the cot's sides.

Check the dropside mechanisms are secure and easy for an adult to use, but not a child.

Select a fixed based cot with the lowest possible base.

Make sure there are no horizontal bars or decorations which could be used to climb out of the cot.

Check there are no protrusions to catch clothing on.

Always follow the manufacturer's assembly instructions and keep them somewhere safe to refer to.



A simple test is to place a soft drink can between the vertical bars. If the can is just touching the bars, it should comply.

'Real Life' Cases

Four month old caught her head between the bars of the cot and the mattress. Suffocated

Twelve-month-old in a cot became entangled in a nearby curtain drawstring. Strangled.



For further information refer to the ACCC safety alert brochure titled *Cots* available at acc.gov.au

Visit the ACCC Product Safety Recalls Australia website at recalls.gov.au

Or contact the ACCC Infocentre **1300 302 502**

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Safe Practices

Here are some simple suggestions for your daily routine to ensure your child's safety:

- Cots and beds must be placed well away from exposed blind and curtain cords. They should be kept out of the child's reach and secured to a cleat, hook, or other safety device;
- Position the cot away from windows, heaters and power points to reduce risk of injury from falls, burns and electrocution;
- Check cot regularly for wear and tear. Repair any hazards immediately and do not use the cot until the potential hazard is fixed. Peeling paint could cause choking;
- Remove any items that your child could use as a climbing aid, including large toys, cot bumpers and cushions;
- Refrain from placing small items into your child's cot or in reach of your child, as these could cause choking;
- Items such as pictures and mirrors can fall and should not be hung over cots. Refrain from using toys or mobiles with stretch elastic cords;
- Ensure any adjustable base on the cot is moved to the lowest setting as soon as the child can sit unaided;
- Do not use pillows or bumpers. Children can become wedged in a pillow or bumper and suffocate;
- Never use electric blankets or hot water bottles for babies or young children;
- When children start to climb, it is a sure sign they have outgrown their cots. When this happens, it is time to investigate safer sleeping arrangements eg. a low bed or mattress on the floor.

