Safety at home

- Keep the cot clear of curtain or blind cords as they are a strangulation hazard.
- Keep the cot clear of heaters, stoves, and power points.
- Make sure the space above the cot is free of objects such as pictures or mirrors which could fall onto your child.
- Set the mattress base to the lowest position before your baby can sit up.
- Remove climbing aids (such as a large toy) from the cot once your child can stand.
- Make sure the cot has no more than two legs with castors or that at least one pair of castors has brakes.
- Regularly check that nuts and bolts are tight as per the maintenance instructions supplied with the cot.
- Follow the manufacturer’s instructions carefully (and keep them somewhere safe).

Remember

- Do not use U or V shaped pillows for children under two years old. It is safer not to use a pillow at all for children under two.
- Do not allow small objects that could cause your child to choke to be placed in the cot, or anywhere accessible to your child.
- Never use electric blankets or hot water bottles for babies or young children.
- Do not leave mobiles or toys with stretch/elastic cords in cots.

Second-hand and heirloom cots

Second-hand and heirloom cots can be a hazard to children because:

- the spacing between the bars may be too wide and trap a child’s head or may be too narrow and trap a child’s arms or legs
- the corner posts of the cot may be higher than the sides and ends creating a strangulation hazard if clothes get caught on it
- the catches on the side of the cot may be easy for a child to undo
- older cots may be painted with lead paint that children might chew on and swallow when they are teething.

Titles in the child safety series

Safety alert brochures:
- Babies dummies
- Baby bath aids
- Baby walkers
- Blinds and curtain cords
- Bunk beds
- Cots
- Household furniture hazards for kids
- Toys

Safety guides:
- Keeping baby safe
- Safe toys for kids

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Important notice. The information in this brochure is general in nature and may not be relevant to your specific circumstances. While the ACCC has made every reasonable effort to provide current and accurate information, readers should be aware that the ACCC accepts no liability for any loss or damage whatsoever attributable to reliance upon any of that information. Nothing in this brochure should replace professional advice. The ACCC recommends that users exercise their own skill and care when using the information in this brochure.
SAFETY HAZARD

Cots

Cots have been associated with fatal injuries in children under 12 months old. Young babies are vulnerable to suffocating or choking, and toddlers are at risk of injury from falling while trying to climb out of the cot.

Cot injuries can happen if a child's head, arms or legs are trapped between the bars and panels, between the sides and the mattress or if their clothing is caught on the cot. When a child starts to climb, they have outgrown their cot and it's time to move your child to a single bed.

Changes to the standard for Children's Household Cots AS/NZS 2172 in 2003 amended some of the prescribed measurements. Many cots currently in use are made to the previous standard, and the measurements given as a guide in the diagram below are applicable to cots made to either standard.

Check that the cot meets the following dimensions

- Castor wheels should be on two legs only or at least one pair of castors has brakes.
- Space between bars between 50 to 95 mm.
- Space between cot sides/ends and mattress no more than 20 mm.
- Protrusions from top or sides of the cot no more than 8 mm.
- Base of mattress to top of cot 600 mm minimum.
- Top of mattress to top of cot 500 mm minimum.
- Top of mattress to top of cot 500 mm minimum.