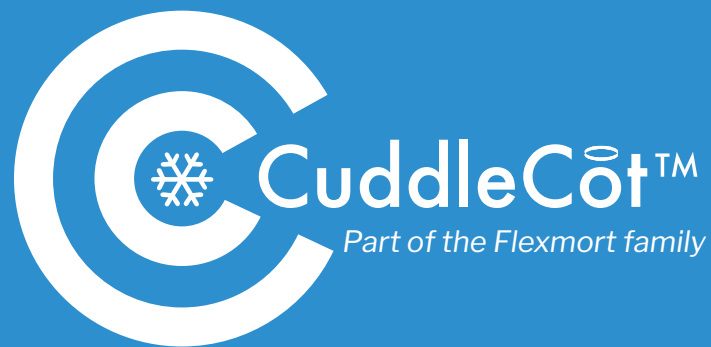




An introduction to cooling a baby after death

cuddlecot.com

Cooling a baby after death

Cooling a baby after death is likely an unfamiliar concept for many families and not something they will have previously considered. Most parents will have little or no understanding of why cooling is recommended or how it works. As healthcare professionals, it is our responsibility to approach this subject with sensitivity and ensure families are fully informed before introducing the CuddleCot or any other cooling option.

Spending extended time with their baby may not feel right for every family, but it is a choice that should be offered to all bereaved families. Whether they wish to spend an hour, several days, or longer with their baby, they should be supported with access to an appropriate cooling device.

The method of cooling will vary depending on the care setting and the equipment available. However, the purpose is the same: to gently lower the baby's body temperature and slow the natural changes that occur after death.

If a family chooses to care for their baby at home, a CuddleCot should be offered. Its lightweight and portable design makes it well suited for home use, allowing families to spend meaningful time together in a familiar and private environment.



CuddleCot and Moses basket provides gentle cooling in a home environment



Families use the gift of time to create memories together



The CuddleCot is designed for use with pre- and full-term babies



Introducing a cooling device to families

It is essential that parents feel fully informed and supported, with the right tools to make decisions that are right for them. Introducing the available cooling device early on can be helpful, particularly if the family is still waiting to give birth.

This information should be included as part of the sensitive conversations or written materials provided to guide families through what to expect, both during the birth and in caring for their baby afterwards.

Parents should be informed of the following:

- What a cooling device is and why it is recommended
- The name of the specific device being used, its components, and how it works
- That their baby will feel cool to the touch, but when using the CuddleCot, the cooling is gentle and controlled so their baby will never feel too cold
- That with the CuddleCot, they can hold their baby in their arms while the device continues to cool

If a family chooses to take their baby home, it is important to provide both verbal and written instructions on how to set up, use, and care for the CuddleCot. Families can also be signposted to our website, where they will find quick start guides, troubleshooting tips, and additional support resources.



The CuddleCot:

- The CuddleCot is a small, compact unit that cools a baby using a water-based system rather than traditional refrigeration components. Water is circulated from the unit through a hose to a temperature cooling pad, which maintains an optimal temperature when in contact with baby.
- The cooling pad is interchangeable to accommodate different baby sizes. A small pad is available for early gestation or premature babies, while a larger mat is ideal for babies over 24 weeks or neonates. Both pads are included as standard with the cooling unit.
- There is no baby too small to use the CuddleCot. If parents wish to spend time with their baby, regardless of size, they should be offered a cooling device. It is important to inform parents that the appearance of a smaller gestation baby may change more quickly than that of a later gestation baby due to a smaller surface area.
- The CuddleCot is a portable device that can be used with any cot or basket and can also be placed on a bed, allowing parents to have their baby close to them. It is also suitable for home use if parents choose to take their baby home.
- The CuddleCot provides families with greater choice. The baby can be cooled while lying in a cot near the parents, or, thanks to the soft, flexible mat, the baby can also be swaddled and held in the parents' arms. Parents can spend time with their baby without feeling rushed to lay them down, as the cooling process continues even while the baby is being held. Despite the cooling effect, parents will not feel cold when holding their baby. Find step by step guides at **cuddlecot.com/manuals**



A CuddleCot facilitates the following

Time with Baby

The CuddleCot provides parents with the gift of time, allowing them to spend precious moments with their baby without feeling rushed or pressured to make immediate decisions.

Families can remain together, with their baby staying in the room rather than being moved to a mortuary, which many parents find deeply distressing. The CuddleCot also enables extended family members to visit and meet the baby, which can be especially important when loved ones need to travel from a distance.

Creation of Memories

This gift of time allows families to create lasting memories together. Parents are encouraged to actively engage in caring for their baby, cuddling, dressing, and bathing them, or even reading and singing to them. Knowing that their time together isn't going to be cut short can provide great comfort.

Slowing the Natural Changes

Cooling a baby helps slow the natural changes that occur after death, preserving their appearance for a longer period compared to when no cooling is used.



Common misconceptions around cooling a baby after death

The CuddleCot is loud when it is in use

The CuddleCot is quiet and discreet. It uses whisper-quiet technology that produces a similar sound to a small desk fan.

You must decide immediately whether you would like to use a CuddleCot

The healthcare professional caring for the family should offer the use of a cooling device on more than one occasion. This may be sensitively discussed before or after a baby is born, the use of professional judgement and an individualised approach to bereavement care is essential. The parents can then choose to use or stop using a cooling device for their baby at a time that is right for them. There is no right or wrong; any decision to use a CuddleCot is unique to the parents. They should feel supported in their decision, with the choices they make respected, and they should be reminded that they can change their mind at any time. It is imperative to ensure that the baby and their family are treated with dignity and respect.

A baby should only remain in the CuddleCot for a certain number of hours/days.

There is no evidence to support how long a baby should remain with the parents or how long they should be actively cooled after death. The emphasis is on the individual needs and wishes of the family. Care should be entirely family focused.

Parents should be sensitively informed of the expected physical changes to their baby following death (i.e. colour changes, skin integrity and leakage of body fluids, odour). They should be reassured that these changes are expected and may be minimised by the correct use of the CuddleCot. If the parents become concerned, they can contact their Funeral Director or designated nurse/midwife.



Common misconceptions around cooling a baby after death

A baby must always remain in the same place

The CuddleCot gently cools baby and helps to slow down the natural changes that occur after death.

The baby is gently laid on the CuddleCot cooling pad; both the baby and the mat are then wrapped in a blanket so that parents can comfortably and confidently hold their baby, without fear of temperature fluctuations. Given that the mat is entirely flexible and portable, The CuddleCot can be used with any cot, bed or bassinet, at home or within a hospital or funeral home setting.

Some parents choose to take baby home with them and use the CuddleCot to keep them close by whilst they make funeral arrangements.

A baby will warm as they are cuddled

The baby is in direct contact with the cooling mat as they are securely swaddled and being cuddled. The CuddleCot is specially designed to cool whatever comes into direct contact with it, therefore irrelevant of where or how the baby is handled, they are consistently being actively cooled.

A baby shouldn't be passed around

Parents should be advised that they can care and handle their baby as they wish including bathing, dressing and cuddling, however over handling may increase the rate of deterioration. This is due to friction that may occur to delicate skin and tissues caused by excessive handling. The role of the healthcare professional is to make parents aware of the choices available to them, following their baby's death, and to support their decision making.



Common misconceptions around cooling a baby after death

A baby cannot go home from hospital

All bereaved parents should receive information about the option of taking their baby home. A health professional should talk them through the practicalities involved and any emotional support offered. The parents' decision will be individual to them and must be supported and respected". (SANDS, 2015)

Following the death of a baby, some parents decide to take their baby home from the hospital or hospice before the funeral for a short time. All bereaved parents should be offered the opportunity to take their baby's body home and healthcare professionals must empower parents to care for their baby at home

This isn't necessarily the right option for all families but for some it brings immense comfort. For a bereaved parent, taking your baby home provides you with the opportunity to spend time with them privately and in comforting, familiar surroundings.

Potential benefits for parents who want to take their baby home include:

- Spending time with their baby away from a clinical setting and an opportunity to say goodbye in the privacy of their own home.
- Time to introduce their baby to siblings, extended family and friends and to recognise the baby's place within the family.
- Greater opportunities to create precious memories with their baby.
- An opportunity to parent and care for their baby in the place they envisaged doing so.

Parents may also want to take their baby to a place away from the home that has special significance to them.



Common misconceptions around cooling a baby after death

Cuddling a baby will make the parents feel cold

The CuddleCot is specially designed to cool whatever comes into direct contact with it, therefore irrelevant of where or how the baby is handled, they are consistently being actively cooled. Given that the parent's are not in direct contact with the cooling mat, they will not feel cold. The cool air becomes trapped within the swaddle, creating a perfect environment for cooling the baby.

The overall condition of a baby will not deteriorate at all whilst using the CuddleCot

Keeping the baby's body cold reduces the rate of decomposition by slowing the growth of bacteria that contribute to the decomposition process. The rate at which natural changes occur may also be affected by other factors (maternal infection, gestation, length of time since death in utero etc).

It is important that parents are aware of some physical changes that may occur to the baby's overall condition. The colour of their baby's skin and lips may change over time, and parents may notice some peeling of their skin as it becomes fragile. This is often more evident on their hands, feet and wrists but can occur in other places too.

It is also not unusual for small amounts of watery fluid to leak from the baby's nose after he/she has died. Although this can be difficult for the parents to see, it is nothing to be alarmed by and can be wiped away gently using a soft tissue or baby wipe. They should be reassured that these changes are expected and may be minimised by the correct use of the CuddleCot.

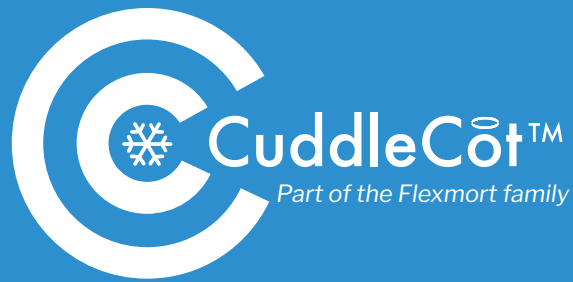


CuddleCot Training

For further help and support please visit cuddlecot.com/training

Or reach out to our team on 08455 333561/800 992 8977 or contact info@cuddlecot.com





Portable, temperature-controlled cooling for pre- and full-term infants, usable in any bassinet or while held in a parent's arms.



**FREE Evidence
Based e-Learning**



**Online Training
Resources**



**Guides include
how to swaddle
a baby with the
CuddleCot**

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