

Car seat insert enhances safety for infants

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Research into an infant car safety seat insert has highlighted the importance of not leaving infants to sleep in their car safety seat.

It's already known that in the first few months of life, even full term infants restrained in their car safety seats often have brief periods of low oxygen saturation, says lead [researcher](#), Dr Christine McIntosh, from the Department of Physiology at The University of Auckland.

"Babies' heads usually slump forward when they fall asleep in their seats. We wanted to find out whether an insert that allows the infant head to rest upright in sleep could improve safety by reducing periods of low oxygen," she says.

In a paper just published in the journal, Paediatrics, a [randomized controlled study](#) showed that the infant car seat insert reduced the number of stop breathing episodes due to obstruction (blocking the airway) and reduced the fall in oxygen levels during these episodes.

But it did not significantly reduce the overall rate of moderate low oxygen events, says Dr McIntosh.

"Even reducing severity of the fall in [oxygen levels](#) is important and is a good indicator that the insert did help make babies safer," she says.

"This study also highlights the importance of not using cars seats as a place of sleep for infants. Sudden unexpected deaths in infants (SUDI) can occasionally occur in [car seats](#)/ capsules."

The foam plastic insert is already available commercially and is designed to allow the infant head to rest in a neutral position in sleep. The study tested whether this prevented obstruction of the infant's upper airway and thus reduced episodes of low oxygen.

Provided by University of Auckland

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