

Breathe easy

“ He would have been much too young and would have been much too weak to release himself.”

Coroner's report, blind cord strangulation

Such a scary thought that something could stop your child breathing. But, the steps to stop that happening are simple and make sense.

 **Window blinds** – it can take just 20 seconds for a toddler to die from strangulation with an unsafe window blind cord.

- Fit a cleat hook or tensioner to keep blind cords and chains safely away and always use them. New blinds should come with these
- Consider cord free blinds for children's rooms
- Remember children may climb and get higher than you think. Move bedroom furniture away from cords and chains
- Make sure the cords on the back of Roman blinds are connected using a device that breaks under pressure.

 **Sleeping and slings** – babies can be suffocated by things they can't push away.

- A clear cot is a safe cot – avoid duvets, pillows and cot bumpers
- Don't sleep on the sofa with your baby as it increases their chances of suffocation massively
- If you're exhausted or have been drinking or smoking, or if they are premature or low birth weight, don't sleep with your baby in your bed
- Follow the T.I.C.K.S advice for slings or carriers www.babyslingsafety.co.uk

 **Nappy sacks** – young babies naturally grasp things and pull them to their mouths, but aren't able to pull them away. They can suffocate on flimsy nappy sacks.

- Store nappy sacks well out of reach of babies
- Never store nappy sacks under the cot mattress.

 **Choking** – babies and young children are still learning to chew, swallow and breathe in the right order. There's no sound to warn you. But there are simple ways to stop it happening.

- Don't prop a baby's bottle up to feed them
- Cut round food like grapes, tomatoes and big blueberries in half lengthways or quarters, not just across
- Cut hard food like carrots, apples, sausages and cheese into thin strips, and chop nuts up small
- Avoid popcorn, marshmallows and hard round sweets like mini eggs or boiled sweets
- Put small parts from older children's toys out of reach
- Watch the Chokeables film for first aid advice www.sja.org.uk/thechokeables

