



## SLEEP ON YOUR LEFT

The best sleeping position for you is the left side. The left side position allows maximum blood flow to your baby and helps reduce the risk of stillbirth.

You should lie down to sleep on your left each night in the last 3 months of pregnancy. Do not worry about shifting positions once you have fallen asleep, as this is a natural part of sleeping. However, if you wake up or get up in the night then return to the left side position before you go back to sleep.

Getting up in the night is good for your baby as it stimulates blood flow.

Avoid sleeping on your back: because the baby's weight presses on the main vein that returns blood from the lower body to the heart. It also puts full weight on your back and intestines, which can cause you discomfort and increase the risk of you developing backaches, and indigestion.

Tucking a pillow behind your back, may help you if you are afraid of lying on your back when you are asleep. Some women find it helpful to place a small pillow or cushion between their knees when lying on their side.



## ALWAYS KEEP APPOINTMENTS

Keep all your antenatal appointments. Keeping appointments means that your midwife or obstetrician will be able to monitor you and your baby's health to ensure, as far as possible, that you and your baby remain healthy.

Keeping these appointments also gives you the chance to build trust with your midwife or doctor and talk through any worries you may have and ask questions.



**IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO DISCUSS YOUR INDIVIDUAL SITUATION WITH YOUR MIDWIFE OR OBSTETRICIAN.**



## FEELING BABY MOVE

Once you're feeling kicks regularly, pay attention to them and get to know when your baby moves.

### How often should my baby move?

Every baby has their own pattern of activity, and there's no correct one. It is not necessary to try to count movements but to simply tune into and become aware of your individual baby's normal sleep and wake cycle. It is common for babies to gradually become less vigorous with their kicks closer to the birth, due to less space. However, if your baby is moving less than they normally do then you should ring your midwife or doctor right away.

### Avoid self monitoring the fetal heart at home:

Listening to your baby's heart rate on a fetal monitor at home should not be substituted for seeing your midwife or doctor. If you are concerned about your baby's movements don't delay seeing your midwife or obstetrician.



## EARLY EXPERT ADVISE

Women who have experienced a stillbirth often say they felt there was something wrong but, for some reason, didn't contact their doctor or midwife until it was too late.

### Between your appointments you should immediately contact your Midwife or Obstetrician if you are:

- spotting or bleeding,
- leaking fluid,
- swelling in your fingers or ankles,
- having headaches, blurry vision or seeing spots,
- feeling nauseous or vomiting (once morning sickness is over)
- having a lot more back or stomach ache than is usual for you
- excessively itchy
- feeling unwell in any way
- feeling there is something wrong even if you don't quite know what it is. Trust your maternal instincts and quickly arrange to see your midwife or obstetrician



## WHAT IS STILLBIRTH?

Stillbirth is when a baby is born with no signs of life because it has died in the womb. This can happen anytime from the middle to the end of pregnancy.

## WHAT ARE MY RISKS?

In Australia stillbirth occurs every 1 in 140 births. This means that there are around 2,000 stillbirths each year or about 6 stillbirths every day. This number is many more than the numbers killed in road accidents each year.

## WHAT CAN I DO TO KEEP MY BABY SAFE?

Stillbirth often can't be predicted or avoided. However, there are a number of things that you can do to lower your risk. This pamphlet gives you some current information on the main things you can do.



## HOW DO I FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION?

These websites provide more information about keeping healthy in pregnancy and birth choices:

### Better Health Channel

Search for 'fact sheets' on diet and exercise in pregnancy and antenatal care.

[www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au)

### SA Health

SA pregnancy record site provides useful information about the range of antenatal care providers and place of birth choice available in SA

[www.health.sa.gov.au/PEHS/pregnancy-record/pregnancy-choices.htm](http://www.health.sa.gov.au/PEHS/pregnancy-record/pregnancy-choices.htm)

These websites are specifically aimed at increasing public awareness about stillbirth:

### Stillbirth Foundation

[www.stillbirthfoundation.org.au](http://www.stillbirthfoundation.org.au)

### International Stillbirth Alliance

[www.stillbirthalliance.org](http://www.stillbirthalliance.org)

These organisations offer support after a stillbirth:

### Sids and Kids

[www.sidsandkids.org](http://www.sidsandkids.org)

### SANDS Australia

[www.sands.org.au](http://www.sands.org.au)

### TLC Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support Australia

[www.teddyloveclub.org.au](http://www.teddyloveclub.org.au)

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Bendigo Bank *sidsandkids*

THE ANNUAL RATE OF  
STILLBIRTHS IN AUSTRALIA  
EXCEEDS ROAD DEATHS  
BY UP TO 40%\*

KEEPING BABY  
SAFE IN  
PREGNANCY.

\* Dept of Infrastructure Transport Regional Development and Local Government 2009 and Journal of Consumers Health Forum of Australia 2009.