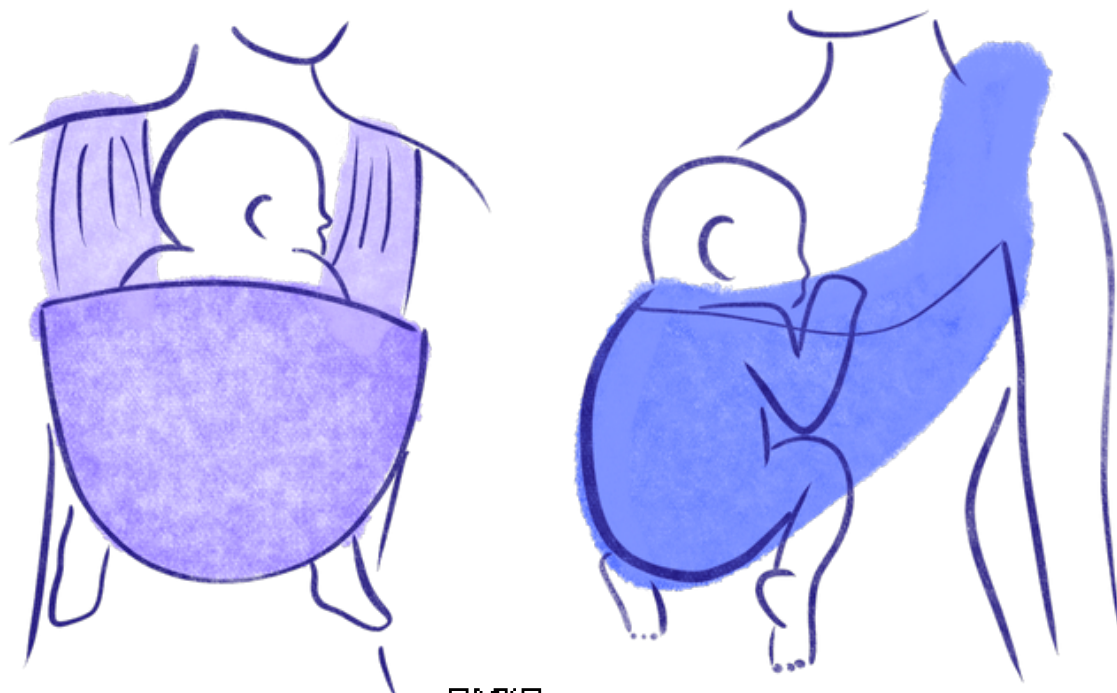


Using Infant Carriers/Slings With Babies Following Neonatal Care



Illustrations by Dr Maggie Frej



This information is aimed at parents who have had babies born prematurely, at a low birth weight or with additional medical needs who have been cared for on a neonatal unit.

Please also talk to your Neonatal Therapist, Nurse or Doctor if your baby has ongoing medical needs or is still on the neonatal unit.

If your baby is born prematurely or has been cared for on the neonatal unit then you may be worried about using a sling/baby carrier with them ...

Did you know that there are safety checks and advice to make sure your baby is safe in a sling?



Have you thought about using a sling or do you own one already?

Knowing which sling to buy and how to use it can be very confusing!

There are trained peer supporters, baby wearing consultants and sling libraries that can give you advice on the right sling and how to use it safely.

SCAN
ME



for EoE Sling Library
contacts

Families of all babies, especially babies born at a low birth weight or with additional needs, are encouraged to find out which carriers are best suited to their babies.

They are also recommended to understand the important safety guidance in order to reduce the risks to infants in carriers.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) safety advice can be found [here](#):



Illustration by Dr Maggie Frej

Benefits of using a sling

LESS CRYING, MORE LEARNING

Babies that are carried in slings cry less and spend more time in a calm alert state, ideal for learning.

Using a sling can be a good way to calm a 'fussy' baby.

SUPPORTS FEEDING AND DIGESTION

Carrying your baby close to you can help milk production if breastfeeding. Holding your baby in an upright position can also help digestion, reduce reflux and ease discomfort.

If you want to learn how to safely feed in your sling contact your local sling library for specialist 1:1 support.

PRACTICAL SUPPORT

A sling can help you to complete other activities or to be able to go places without having to take a buggy with you.

SUPPORTS BONDING AND ATTACHMENT

Provides closeness and security for your baby which supports infant mental health and later development of their confidence.

GOOD FOR PARENT MENTAL HEALTH

Holding your baby close can increase the production of oxytocin (love hormone) which can help reduce postnatal depression/mood disorders. A sling can help non-birthing partners too!

SUPPORT PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provides a position change and can help prevent head shape deformities. The sling position supports development of back and neck strength- similar to tummy time.

SUPPORTS LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIABILITY

When a baby is carried in a sling they can hear, and feel the sounds that you make when you talk, they can watch your face and mouth movements and your expression. It is easier for them to be part of day to day conversations and interactions.

More information and links to research can be found [here](#):



www.carryingmatters.co.uk



When can I start using a sling?

If your baby is still being cared for on the neonatal unit then please speak to a Neonatal Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist if you wish to start using a sling.



Illustration by Dr Maggie Frej

When your baby reaches 5lb/2.3kg there are specific slings designed to provide the recommended support and position for small babies. *Please contact your local sling library for specialist 1:1 support*

If your baby is very small they can benefit from being close to you in a skin to skin position (kangaroo care).

Slings/baby carriers have different minimum weight limits set by the manufacturers, it is important to check the instructions of any sling you use.

Most popular high street carriers/slugs recommend a baby has to be over 7lbs/3.2kg. Some babies still need more support in a sling until they are bigger- always check the fit not just the minimum weight.



Carrying Safely

AIRWAY

Check your baby's airway is supported and that fresh air can circulate around their face

A good position for baby should mimic the in arms upright position for carrying babies. The caregiver should be able to see baby at all times

BODY POSITION

Check your baby has a supported spine and that they are not slumping in the sling.
Your baby's knees should be higher than their bottom, weight distributed through thighs & bottom.



Illustration by Dr Maggie Frej

COMFORT

Are you and your baby a comfortable temperature?

QUICK CHECK

follow the T.I.C.K.S



- Tight
- In view at all times
- Close enough to kiss
- Keep chin off chest
- Supported back

A DETAILED ARTICLE ON SAFE SLING USE CAN BE FOUND [HERE](#):

The website also has information on how to adapt your practice if the weather is very hot or cold.



Carrying Matters
Dr Rosie Knowles



East of England
Neonatal
Operational Delivery Network

Collaborative working to deliver high quality care to our babies and their families

T.I.C.K.S

GUIDANCE FOR SAFE BABYWEARING

Keep your baby **CLOSE** and **SAFE** when wearing a sling or carrier, don't forget the **TICKS** ...

T

TIGHT - Slings & carriers should be tight enough to hold your baby close to you. Any loose fabric will allow your baby to slump down in the carrier, which can make it harder for baby to breathe and may be uncomfortable for you.



I

IN VIEW AT ALL TIMES - You should always be able to see your baby's face by simply looking down. The fabric of the sling or carrier should not cover their face.

C

CLOSE ENOUGH TO KISS - Your baby's head should be close to your chin as is comfortable. By tipping your head forward you should be able to kiss your baby on the head or forehead.



K

KEEP CHIN OFF CHEST - a baby should never be curled so their chin is forced onto their chest as this can make it harder for them to breathe. There should always a space of at least a finger width under your baby's chin.

S

SUPPORTED BACK - A sling should support a baby's back in it's natural position, with their tummy and chest against you. If a sling is too loose they can slump which can make it harder for them to breathe.

(this can be tested by placing a hand on your baby's back and pressing gently- they should not uncurl or move any closer to you.)

