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Safety at home

- ✔ Keep the cot clear of curtain or blind cords as they are a strangulation hazard.
- ✔ Keep the cot clear of heaters stoves and power points.
- ✔ Make sure the space above the cot is free of objects such as pictures or mirrors which could fall onto your child.
- ✔ Set the mattress base to the lowest position before your baby can sit up.
- ✔ Remove climbing aids (such as a large toy) from the cot once your child can stand.
- ✔ Make sure the cot has no more than two legs with castors or that at least one pair of castors has brakes.
- ✔ Regularly check that nuts and bolts are tight as per the maintenance instructions supplied with the cot.
- ✔ Follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully (and keep them somewhere safe).

Second-hand and heirloom cots

Second-hand and heirloom cots can be a hazard to children because:

- the spacing between the bars may be too wide and trap a child's head or may be too narrow and trap a child's arms or legs
- the corner posts of the cot may be higher than the sides and ends creating a strangulation hazard if clothes get caught on it
- the catches on the side of the cot may be easy for a child to undo
- older cots may be painted with lead paint that children might chew on and swallow when they are teething.

Remember

- ✘ Do not use U or V shaped pillows for children under two years old. It is safer not to use a pillow at all for children under two.
- ✘ Do not allow small objects that could cause your child to choke to be placed in the cot, or anywhere accessible to your child.
- ✘ Never use electric blankets or hot water bottles for babies or young children.
- ✘ Do not leave mobiles or toys with stretch/elastic cords in cots.

Titles in the child safety series

Safety alert brochures:

- Babies dummies*
- Baby bath aids*
- Baby walkers*
- Blinds and curtain cords*
- Bunk beds*
- Cots*
- Household furniture hazards for kids*
- Toys*

Safety guides:

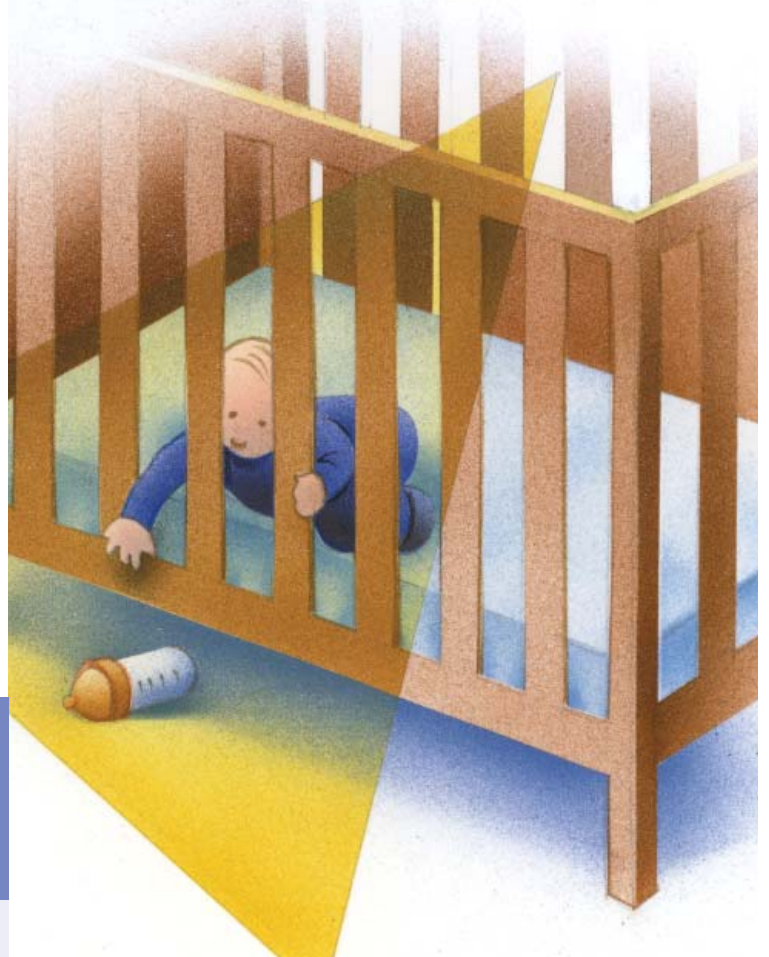
- Keeping baby safe*
- Safe toys for kids*

For further information
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Cots



SAFETY HAZARD

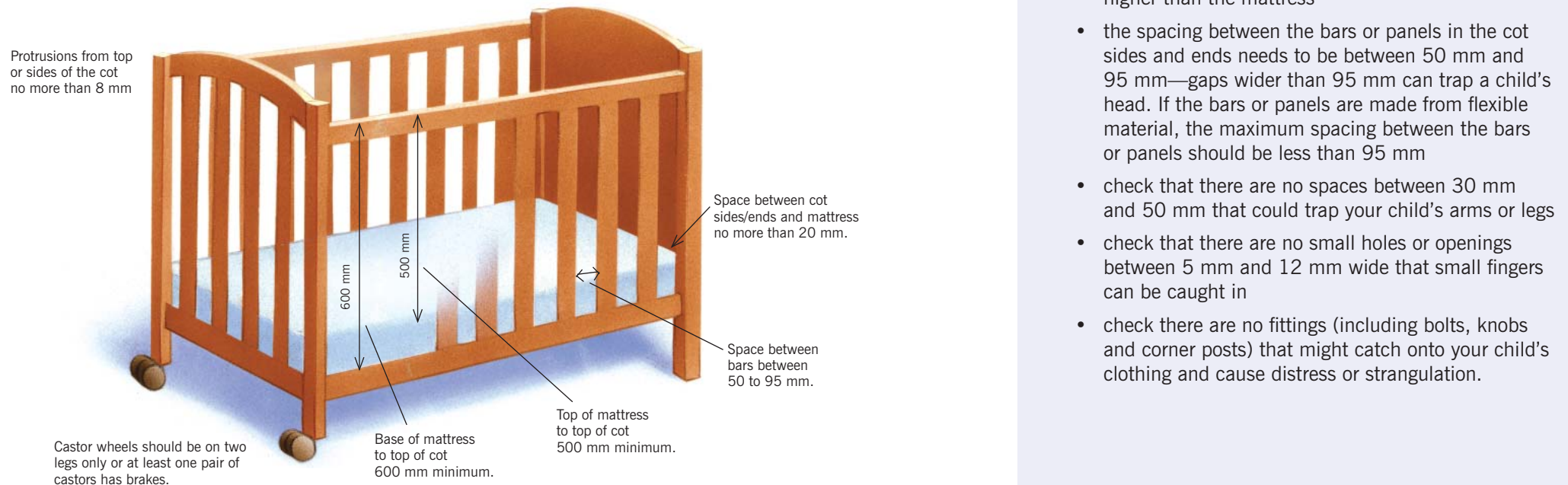
Cots

Cots have been associated with fatal injuries in children under 12 months old. Young babies are vulnerable to suffocating or choking, and toddlers are at risk of injury from falling while trying to climb out of the cot.

Cot injuries can happen if a child's head, arms or legs are trapped between the bars and panels, between the sides and the mattress or if their clothing is caught on the cot. When a child starts to climb, they have outgrown their cot and it's time to move your child to a single bed.

Changes to the standard for Children's Household Cots AS/NZS 2172 in 2003 amended some of the prescribed measurements. Many cots currently in use are made to the previous standard, and the measurements given as a guide in the diagram below are applicable to cots made to either standard.

Check that the cot meets the following dimensions



Before you buy

- ✔ Select a cot that complies with the mandatory safety standard based on the Australian Standard for household cots AS/NZS 2172. Look for a label or sticker that says the cot complies with the mandatory standard. If there isn't one, ask the retailer. If the retailer cannot verify that it complies, do not buy it. All cots sold, even second-hand ones, must comply with this standard.
- ✔ Check that bars, panels, mattress base and drop sides are firmly attached.
- ✔ Take a tape measure with you when you go shopping so you can check the size of gaps and openings:
 - the mattress must fit snugly to within 20 mm of sides and ends
 - with the mattress base set in the lower position, the cot sides or end need to be at least 500 mm higher than the mattress
 - the spacing between the bars or panels in the cot sides and ends needs to be between 50 mm and 95 mm—gaps wider than 95 mm can trap a child's head. If the bars or panels are made from flexible material, the maximum spacing between the bars or panels should be less than 95 mm
 - check that there are no spaces between 30 mm and 50 mm that could trap your child's arms or legs
 - check that there are no small holes or openings between 5 mm and 12 mm wide that small fingers can be caught in
 - check there are no fittings (including bolts, knobs and corner posts) that might catch onto your child's clothing and cause distress or strangulation.