



## Adult Beds

In 2012 a six-month-old baby was fatally strangled when her head became trapped between the mattress and her parent's bed. The baby was sleeping in her parent's bed and it is unclear how her head became caught between the mattress and the bed. The parents noticed that their daughter was unconscious and removed her from the bed. She was taken to the hospital and was declared dead after three days of medical care.

Source: The National Center for Children's Safety and Health. BETEREM. Data from the Israel National Pediatric Injury and Safety Surveillance (NAPIS). 2013.

### Why can adult beds pose a problem?

- Estimates using EU Injury Database (IDB) data indicate that annually in the EU 28 Member States approximately 10,000 injuries to children 0-14 years of age involving adult beds are serious enough to require a visit to the emergency department.
- The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission has reports of more than 100 deaths of children under age 2 associated with adult beds over a three-year time period, mostly from suffocation. These deaths involved an entrapment, a fall, or a situation in which bedding or the position of the child was related to the death. Nearly all of the children, 98%, were babies under 1 year old.<sup>3</sup>

### How can adult beds be dangerous for children?

Many parents and caregivers are unaware that there are hidden hazards when placing babies on adult beds. Consumers often think that if an adult bed is pushed against a wall, or pillows are placed along the sides of the bed, small babies will be safe as they sleep. However, research shows hidden hazards for babies on adult beds that include:

- Entrapment between the bed and the wall, or between the bed and another object.
- Entrapment involving the bed frame, headboard or footboard.
- Falls from adult beds onto piles of clothing, plastic bags, or other soft materials resulting in suffocation.
- Entrapment of the head, thorax, or abdomen by the body of a person sharing the bed or a blanket or pillow in the bed.
- Falls from adult beds onto the floor.
- Suffocation in soft bedding (such as pillows or thick quilts and comforters) and in waterbeds. Children sink in and if they are lying on their belly they are not able to bring up their head. The water mattress covers the whole face so there is a risk of suffocation.

**SAFETY TIP:**  
The safest place for a baby to sleep is in an appropriate cot in the same room as the parents/caregiver.

**What to look for when buying or prior to using:**

- Check that the bed conforms to European Standard EN 1725:1998 - Domestic furniture. Beds and mattresses. This standard defines the mechanical safety requirements and testing for all kinds of fully erected domestic adult beds, including all component elements (e.g., bed frame, base and mattress).
- Check that the bed has a firm tight-fitting mattress.
- Buy a bed with the head and footboards as one solid piece rather than ones with gaps/spaces or bars.
- Buy a bed with one mattress rather than a bed with two separate mattresses

**How to use adult beds safely:**

- Never let a child under the age of two years sleep alone in an adult bed and always place the baby to sleep on his or her back, not on the stomach.
- If a caretaker chooses to be in an adult bed with a child, make sure to remove soft blankets and pillows as they may cause suffocation. Be sure that the mattress is firm.
- Place a carpet or mattress on each side of the bed in case the child falls off.

**Recommendation:**

The safest place for a baby to sleep is in an appropriate cot in the same room as the parents/caregiver.



<sup>3</sup> U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Document 5091, The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission Cautions Caregivers about Hidden Hazards for Babies on Adult Beds. Washington, DC: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/cribsafe.HTML>