

Making a Temporary Baby Bed

The safest place for a baby to sleep is on their back, in a crib, cradle or bassinet. Bassinet attachments for playpens are a safe option until your baby starts to roll over or reaches the product's weight limit. If you do not have a crib, cradle, bassinet or playpen with bassinet attachment, contact your public health nurse who will work with you to find a solution.

There may be times when parents or caregivers may need to use other options for a temporary safe sleep space. It is best to discuss your options with your public health nurse who can help you make sure that the sleep space is as safe as possible.

Only newborns and very young infants can use home-made baby beds, which are similar to bassinets. Like bassinets, they can only be used until the baby can roll over (3-4 months of age) or if home-made baby bed becomes too small (baby should be able to stretch and move without touching the top or bottom sides of the bed). In this case your baby will need a larger sleep space such as a crib.



Here are some ideas on how to make a safe sleep space for your baby using a basket, a plastic bin or washtub, a dresser drawer or a box.

When choosing the box, bin, basket or drawer, look for one that is the right size.

- Length should be 26 inches (66 cm) or longer
- Width should be 15 inches (38 cm) or wider
- Sides should be around 9 inches (23) cm high, similar to a bassinet.

See the chart below for measurements of our sample home-made beds

Here are four options for making a temporary home-made bed for baby:

Dresser Drawer		
	<p>Using a dresser drawer may be the best and easiest choice because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may already have one • They are usually the right size • Very sturdy • Less likely to get damaged • Less flammable than cardboard 	<p>What to watch for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lightly sand any rough wood or areas that could cause splinters. Lightly sand rough edges inside the drawer. Wipe or vacuum any dust from sanding. • Tighten any hardware and cover exposed hardware inside the drawer with duct tape or packing tape.
<p>Size of this sample: 26" L x 15" W x 9" H 66 cm x 38.5 cm x 23 cm</p>		
Basket		
	<p>Using a basket is a good choice because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good ventilation • Can be reused for other things when finished being used for baby bed. 	<p>What to watch for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basket should not be damaged or have any straps or strings attached. • Basket should be in good condition (clean, no mold or musty smell) • Look for a tightly woven basket. Small holes in the sides of the basket could trap a finger and large holes could allow an arm or leg to go through.
<p>Size of this sample: 26" L x 15" W x 9" H 67 cm x 38.5 cm x 23cm</p>		

Plastic Bin



Size of this sample:
26" L x 15" W x 9" H
67 cm x 38.5 cm x 23cm

Using a plastic bin is a good choice because it is:

- Washable
- Sturdy
- Not flammable
- Can be reused for storage

What to watch for:

- May be difficult to find one the right size. Look for one with 9"- 10" sides.
- Must be free from cracks or rough edges.
- Should not have been used to store chemicals or cleaning products.
- Avoid ones that could have toxins. Look for a bin that is free from PVCs, Latex, Teflon, Phthalates chemicals, fungicides, Bisphenol A (BPAs), or antibacterial chemicals.
- **Never use the lid** – store it safely away so that older children don't put it on the bin.

Cardboard Box



Size of this sample:
29" L x 16" W x 10" H
74 cm x 41 cm x 26cm

A cardboard box is:

- Inexpensive
- Easy to find

A cardboard box can be used if the above options are not available.

Caution needs to be used with cardboard boxes as they are flammable and easily damaged.

What to watch for:

- May be difficult to find right size. You may need to cut the sides down to 9 or 10".
- Make sure that you put the box together correctly.
- Rough edges. If you need to cut the sides of the box to make it lower, use packing tape or duct tape to cover the raw edges. (see photo)
- Is easily damaged when it gets wet or crushed.

Make a "Mattress" for Baby's Home-made Bed

You can make a surface for your baby to sleep on.

The mattress should be firm, not soft. Never use a pillow or folded blankets under the baby.

You may find a bath mat or a dish drying mat that fits your bed exactly with no gaps around the sides. This is ideal. If you do, buy two so one can go in the wash.

OR

1. Use a single piece of cardboard, corrugated plastic or non-slip bathmat or dish drying mat that is slightly larger than the drawer, basket, bin or box.
2. Measure the inside of the sleep space and cut the cardboard or plastic to fit snugly into the box. There should be less than 3 cm between the "mattress" and any side of the sleep space.



Items that you could use to make a mattress include a small bath mat, dish drying mat, cardboard or corrugated plastic



This bath mat fits the box exactly. It would make a very comfortable mattress. It is washable. Parents could use a pillow case as a sheet.



Drawer with mattress made from plastic

How to Make a Sheet for Mattress

Use a pillow case, fold extra fabric under the mattress and tape it so that it fits snugly. Pillow cases make a good sheet as they are easy to remove and wash.



Where to Place the Home-made Baby Bed

- It's safest to place your baby's bed on the floor next to your bed
- Well-ventilated space
- Never place the bed on a sofa, table or bed or another high surface while baby is inside it.
- Avoid fire and burns by keeping the bed away from baseboard heaters, portable heaters, fireplaces, wood stoves, ovens and other sources of heat.

When to stop using the home-made bed

- When baby starts to roll over
- If it becomes damaged or, if using a box, if it gets wet
- If baby is too big for the bed

Safe Sleep for Baby

- Baby sleeps in their own bed in the same room as parents/caregivers
- Baby sleeps on their back
- Baby sleeps in smoke free room
- Baby sleeps in sleeper only
- Baby only in crib - no bumper pads, pillow, soft toys or loose blankets
- Keep pets out of the room

Other Safety Tips

- Check bed regularly for damage.
- If using a cardboard box or wicker basket, keep it dry.
- Do not use a bumper pad, sleep positioner or extra padding inside the bed.
- Do not put pillows, stuffed animals, or loose blankets inside the bed.
- Do not smoke or keep lit cigarettes near the bed.
- If using a box or bin, do not use the lid when baby is inside.
- Do not carry the box, bin, basket or drawer with the baby inside.
- Keep pets out of baby's sleeping area. Pets, especially cats, can jump into the bed and increase the risk of suffocation or other injuries. Infants should not be left alone with a dog as they are at a greater risk of being bitten, especially on the head.

For more information, contact a Public Health Nurse. To find a Public Health Office near you, call Health Links (in Winnipeg: **204-788-8200**, Toll Free: **1-888-315-9257**).

For more information on child growth, health and safety, including safe sleep, visit Healthy Parenting Winnipeg at <https://healthyparentingwinnipeg.ca>.

