



sheffield  
sling  surgery

# CARRY WELL & CARRY SAFELY

A GUIDE TO SLING USE



This guide will help you use your sling safely and keep your child secure. Your child's safety is ultimately your responsibility, so please use common sense and your own best judgement.

BABIES NEED TO BE CARRIED AND *thrive* WHEN THEY ARE CARRIED

Reduces Crying & Improves Sleeping

### CARRYING IS GOOD FOR YOUR BABY

Promotes close bonding and attachment - vital to physical and emotional health.

Reduces crying, colic and eases the discomfort of reflux.

Assists with breathing, heart rate and temperature regulation.

Gives a greater sense of security and confidence, helping baby to feel safe and calm.

Assists with breastfeeding.

Reduces "flat head syndrome."

### CARRYING IS GOOD FOR YOUR FAMILY

Assists with bonding and can help parents feel more confident.

Promotes and prolongs breastfeeding relationship.

Can reduce post-natal depression.

Allows greater freedom out and about and makes it much easier to access shops and public transport.

Allows you to get on with your daily tasks hands-free whilst keeping your little one happy and safe.

Allows you to spend time with your other children while keeping baby close.

Photos courtesy of Sleepy Nico (cover) and Hello Poppet Photography (above)

FAMILIES *flourish* WHEN THEIR CHILDREN ARE KEPT **CLOSE**

Promotes Close Bonding & Attachment

# SAFETY BASICS

OPEN AIRWAY

CHIN OFF CHEST

SUPPORT BACK

NO SLUMPING

## A VERY YOUNG CHILD IS SAFEST CARRIED ON YOUR FRONT

This is to ensure you can see and sense them at all times. This will help you to be aware of any changes and to quickly respond.

## YOUR CHILD MUST BE ABLE TO BREATHE SAFELY IN THE SLING

Their chest should be snugly resting against your body with no slumping. Their back should be supported in a gentle J shape (tucked pelvis, aligned spine and neck) to keep the airway open and the chin off the chest (a good guide is a space one finger-width or more).

Carrying your child can be a wonderful experience when done well and comfortably



M Shape (small baby)



J Shape (small baby)



M Shape (child)



J Shape (child)

## CARRY YOUR CHILD IN THE SPREAD-SQUAT/M-POSITION

A child whose bottom and legs are well supported from knee to knee in a “spread-squat” or “M position” is likely to be more comfortable. It is better for their growing hips, and more supportive for parents.

## DON'T FORGET TO ALWAYS USE YOUR COMMON SENSE!

Ensure your child's temperature is appropriate; slings behave as extra layers and babies can overheat in too many clothes.

Make sure your sling or carrier is fit for use: of good quality, in good condition, adjusted appropriately and securely tied or fastened. Only use carriers that are appropriate for your baby's age and weight.

Be aware of any objects your child can reach, particularly anything hot or sharp, and exercise caution when near open flames.

Avoid strenuous or jolting activities when carrying that could cause damage to the baby's neck or spine. Equally, avoid lying down when carrying. Do not operate machinery, drive a vehicle or ride a bike when using a sling.

Always remain aware of and responsive to your baby's needs for safety and comfort as well as your own.

If you would like further advice on how to carry well and carry safely, visit [www.slingpages.co.uk](http://www.slingpages.co.uk) to find your local sling library or consultant.

## The T.I.C.K.S. Rule for Safe Babywearing

Keep your baby close and keep your baby safe. When you are wearing a sling or carrier, don't forget the **T.I.C.K.S.**



- ✓ **TIGHT**
- ✓ **IN VIEW AT ALL TIMES**
- ✓ **CLOSE ENOUGH TO KISS**
- ✓ **KEEP CHIN OFF CHEST**
- ✓ **SUPPORTED BACK**



**TIGHT** - Slings and carriers should be tight enough to hug your baby close to you as this will be most comfortable for you both. Any slack/loose fabric will allow your baby to slump down in the carrier which can hinder their breathing and pull on your back.



**IN VIEW AT ALL TIMES** - You should always be able to see your baby's face by simply glancing down. The fabric of a sling or carrier should not close around them so you have to open it to check on them. In a cradle position your baby should be face upwards not be turned in towards your body.



**CLOSE ENOUGH TO KISS** - Your baby's head should be as 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.



**KEEP CHIN OFF THE CHEST** - A baby should never be curled so their chin is forced onto their chest as this can restrict their breathing. Ensure there is always a space of at least a finger width under your baby's chin.



**SUPPORTED BACK** - In an upright carry, a baby should be held comfortably close to the wearer so their back is supported in its natural position and their tummy and chest are against you. If a sling is too loose they can slump which can partially close their airway. (This can be tested by placing a hand on your baby's back and pressing gently – they should not uncurl or move closer to you) A baby in a cradle carry in a pouch or ring sling should be positioned carefully with their bottom in the deepest part so the sling does not fold them in half pressing their chin to their chest.

[www.babyslingsafety.co.uk](http://www.babyslingsafety.co.uk). Thanks to UK Sling Consortium.



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For further reading please visit [www.sheffieldslingsurgery.co.uk/babywearing-safety/](http://www.sheffieldslingsurgery.co.uk/babywearing-safety/)