



The Nest Study – Information Sheet 1st June 2016

Cold and damp housing have been shown in many studies to be linked to asthma in children. We have shown recently that dampness is also related to the onset of wheezing in children. In this study we are looking at how improving heating and how using different types of bedding might help reduce the chance of wheezing and asthma in young children. This research is part of He Kainga Oranga Housing and Health Research Programme conducted by the University of Otago Wellington, funded by the Health Research Council. The study has been approved by the Central Health and Disability Ethics Committee (Ref: 15/CEN/181). This study includes researchers from the University of Otago, Tu Kotahi Māori Asthma Trust and Naku Enei Tamariki.

If you volunteer to take part, researchers will visit you at home a few months before your baby is born and again when your baby is three months old. On the first visit we will ask you some questions about your home and about your and your family's respiratory health. If your home's ceiling and floor is not insulated, we will arrange for an insulation check. We would also ask some details about your power company and organise for a \$200 power voucher to be credited to your power account during your baby's first winter. A brand new safe sleepsack will be delivered to you for your baby to sleep in each night until they are two years old and we will talk to you about how to safely use the sleepsack and how to take care of the sleepsack.

We will then visit you again when your baby is three months old to ask you a few questions about your baby's health and to take two vacuum samples from your baby's bed and bedroom floor, to help us measure allergens. After these visits, we will then keep in touch with you about how using the sleepsack was going, by sending you a text message, email or letter every 6 months – you can choose which way you'd like us to contact you.

When your baby is 2 years old we will organise for you both to come along to our allergy clinic, so that your baby can be tested to see if they are allergic to common food and environmental allergens. Allergy testing involves applying some small pricks on the skin. If your child is allergic to something it may form a small itchy bump like an itchy bite, which normally disappears after 20 minutes. Allergy testing does not involve any blood being drawn from your child. After we have measured the size of any bumps we can put some cream on to take the itching away. Severe reactions to the allergens we test for are extremely rare, but we will be equipped and trained to deal with these if they were to occur. We'd also get you to bring along your sleep sack to the visit so we can take a vacuum sample to check the allergen levels. At this visit we will also ask you some questions about your child's respiratory health. After your visit we will also check your child's doctor's records for respiratory health information, with your permission.

What is a sleepsack? A sleepsack is a small safe sleeping bag for your baby to sleep in. The sleepsack has adjustable buttons for under your baby's arms and chest, so that you can adjust these to the size of your baby as they grow bigger. We will show you how to safely use the sleepsack and also explain how you should wash and clean it, and what to do if this happens in the middle of the night! We are looking at three different types of sleepsack in our study; wool, cotton-composite and feather sleepsacks. The sleepsacks have all been manufactured so that they give your baby the same warmth factor. We don't know if one type of sleepsack is better at improving respiratory health than the others; it is part of the study to find out. We would randomly give you one type of sleepsack.

What if we want to go away or my child sleeps elsewhere? Wherever your child is sleeping, we'd like them to continue to use the sleepsack and for it to go with them.

Can I choose my type of sleepsack? Unfortunately no, as part of the scientific design of the study we have to randomly assign you to which type of sleepsack you receive, otherwise we could accidentally introduce a bias into the study.

What is the power voucher for? The power voucher is to help you with the cost of keeping your baby's room warm during their first winter. We'll talk to you about your plans for heating your baby's room at our first visit. The World Health Organisation recommends that we keep our bedrooms heated to at least 18°C during the day and night. It's important that we don't overheat babies' rooms though too, as they aren't very good at regulating their own temperatures until they are 9 months old. We'll give you a room thermometer to help you know what temperature your baby's room is. We'll find out the details of your power company when we first visit you, and organise for a \$200 voucher to be paid directly to your power account. The payment would be made either when your baby is born if your baby is born during winter, or by the May after your baby is born, if your baby is born in spring, summer or autumn. To help us organise the power payment, we'll need a copy of a previous bill, so that we can record your power account details. You can let us know if you change power companies between when we take the details and the payment, so we make sure the money comes to your correct account.

Why do you want access to my child's medical records? When your child is two years old we would like to check details in your child's medical records. This will help us to record things like whether they have had to use any antibiotics, had any ear infections, or had to use any medications for wheezing. We'll ask you these questions too, but sometimes it can be tricky to remember what you've been given and when, which is why we like to also check the doctor's records.

What if we move homes during the study? Let us know before you move and we will talk to you about your plans. As long as you plan to move within New Zealand and stay with the same power company, the power voucher will still be available for you to use at your new address.

What are the benefits of taking part? There are lots of benefits in taking part in this study! We will also give you a thermometer for your baby's room and a \$200 power voucher to help with the cost of heating your baby's bedroom for their first winter. We will check if your house has insulation and give you a new sleepsack for your baby to sleep in till they are two years old. When your child is two years of age you can find out whether your child is allergic to any of the common food and environmental allergens. If they are allergic we will provide you with advice on what to do. Your participation in the study will allow us to gain further information on whether we can reduce respiratory illness in children by improving heating, and using different types of bedding.

Can I take part in some of the study but not all? There are some parts of the study that we do need everybody to do, such as using the sleepsack each night until your child is two, but if you do not wish to take part in everything, such as the skin prick testing, do feel free to discuss this with us.

Can I change my mind? Yes you can withdraw from the study, although we hope that you will continue to participate. If you change your mind about being involved, please phone the study team.

If you have any queries or concerns regarding your rights as a participant in this study, you may wish to contact a Health and Disability Advocate on 0800 423 638 or email advocacy@hdc.org.nz. For any questions around Māori cultural aspects of the study, phone Cheryl Davies on 939 4629. If you would like to discuss any part of this research or your participation in it, please phone our research staff on 918 6883 or email nest.study@otago.ac.nz.