

Co-sleeping with your baby: Is it safe?

Co-sleeping, or sharing a bed with your infant, could put your child in harm's way.

Many families practice co-sleeping, but according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) placing babies to sleep in adult beds puts them at risk of suffocation or strangulation. In fact, a CPSC study found that an average of 64 babies under the age of two die each year after being placed to sleep in adult beds, including waterbeds and daybeds. Babies can: suffocate when an adult rolls on top of or against them; become entrapped or wedged between the mattress or another object; suffocate when they are lying face down on an adult mattress or soft bedding; strangle when their head becomes trapped in rails or openings on the bed.

If you do choose to share your bed with your baby, take precautions!

- ♥ Never co-sleep with your baby if you are under the influence of alcohol or any drug, because that could reduce your awareness of the baby.
- ♥ Don't let other children, particularly toddlers, sleep with your infant.
- ♥ Make sure your mattress fits snugly in the bed frame so that your baby won't become trapped in between the frame and the mattress.
- ♥ Don't place a baby to sleep in an adult bed alone.



- ♥ Don't use pillows, comforters, quilts, and other soft or plush items on the bed.
- ♥ Don't place your bed near draperies or blinds where your child could be strangled by cords.

To keep your little one close by, without putting your baby in your bed, try placing a bassinet or crib next to your bed. This can help you maintain that desired closeness, which can be especially important if you're breastfeeding. The AAP (American Academy of Pediatrics) says that having an infant sleep in a separate crib in the same room as the mother reduces the risk of SIDS.

- ♥ Always place your baby on his back to sleep to reduce the risk of SIDS (*Sudden Infant Death Syndrome*)
- ♥ Always leave your child's head uncovered while sleeping.
- ♥ Make sure your headboard and footboard don't have openings or cutouts that could trap your baby's head.

Source: CPSC and KidsHealth
(www.kidshealth.org)



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