

Co-Sleeping or Bed-Sharing

Co-sleeping, also known as **bed sharing** or having a **family bed**, is a contentious subject between mothers in the United States. Although government health organizations and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) do not recommend bed-sharing, it is accepted that the decision is solely down to the parents.

The AAP strongly discourages bed-sharing with infants younger than 1 year because this practice puts babies at risk for suffocation, strangulation, and parent rollover. But as many as 60 percent of parents admit they bed-share with their babies at least sometimes (usually during or after a late-night feeding).

Parents practicing bed-sharing may share one or more of the following believed benefits:

- Breastfeeding
- Comforting
- Better/more sleep
- Monitoring
- Bonding/attachment
- Crying
- Tradition
- Maternal instinct

Parents practicing bed-sharing should:

- Take precautions to prevent the baby from falling out of bed, or become trapped between the bed and its frame or the bed and the wall
- Place the baby on his/her back to sleep
- Make sure the mattress is firm (e.g., no memory foam or waterbed) without any loose sheets or fluffy blankets and pillows
- Place the baby beside the mother
- Keep baby from overheating by dressing him lightly for sleep
- Move the pillows up and away so they are nowhere near the baby
- Make sure the bedclothes cannot cover the baby's face or head

The UNICEF UK states that if you decide to share a bed with your baby, beware of

- It is not safe to bed-share in the early months if the baby was born very small or preterm
- Do not sleep with the baby when you have been drinking any alcohol or taking drugs that may cause drowsiness
- Do not put yourself in a position where you could doze off with your baby on a sofa or armchair

References:

- [Bed-sharing with baby: the risks and benefits \(medicalnewstoday.com\)](http://medicalnewstoday.com)
- [Stats On Co-Sleeping & How Moms Do It \(romper.com\)](http://romper.com)
- [Guidelines for Safe Co-Sleeping with Babies \(parents.com\)](http://parents.com)
- [Information about co-sleeping: the family bed \(cosleeping.org\)](http://cosleeping.org)
- [Reasons for mother-infant bed-sharing: a systematic narrative synthesis of the literature and implications for future research - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](http://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)
- [Safe Co-Sleeping Guidelines - What's Best for You? \(sleepadvisor.org\)](http://sleepadvisor.org)
- [CARING FOR YOUR BABY AT NIGHT A guide for parents \(UNICEF UK\)](http://unicef.org)
- [Safe Co-Sleeping Guidelines - Philips \(philips-digital.com\)](http://philips-digital.com)
- [18 Safe Co-Sleeping Guidelines - What's Best for You? \(sleepadvisor.org\)](http://sleepadvisor.org)

