

BREASTFEEDING ANSWERS

Breastfeeding and Sleep for Mom and Baby

It is normal for your baby to feed during the night. Babies grow fast in the first weeks and months and have small stomachs. While it can be hard to be awake during the night, it can also be a nice, quiet time to be with your baby.

There are lots of ways that you and your baby can sleep well and safely. Here is information to help you carefully choose where your baby sleeps.

Where Should Your Baby Sleep?

1. Room-sharing - sharing a room with your baby.

Health Canada states that the safest place for your baby to sleep for the first six months is in a crib by the side of your bed within arm's reach. The crib must meet Canadian safety standards.

2. Bed-sharing – sharing the same sleeping surface.

Many mothers lie down to breastfeed for one or more feedings. You may fall asleep while breastfeeding and comforting your baby whether you intend to or not. It is important to always create a safe space for your baby since unsafe bed sharing increases the risk of SIDS.

Bed sharing is unsafe if any of these apply:

- You are not breastfeeding
- You or your partner are obese
- You smoked during your pregnancy or if you or your partner smoke now
- Sleeping on a waterbed, recliner, sofa, armchair, couch or bean bag
- Using lots of pillows, a sagging mattress, a feather mattress or a sheepskin
- Using heavy bedding, such as comforters or duvets
- The room is too hot
- You or your partner are under the influence of alcohol, drugs or medications
- There are other children who can climb into the bed
- There are pets that can climb into the bed
- There are stuffed toys on the bed that could cover your baby's face
- Your baby is premature and/or small for gestational age
- Your baby is sharing a bed with people other than you or your partner

Caring for baby at night

It is important to make sure your space is set up for getting as much rest as possible.

- Keep the room fairly dark
- Keep your baby close
- Listen for early feeding cues
- Talk only in a soft, quiet voice
- Don't change your baby unless needed

When babies don't settle

Place your baby in skin to skin contact with you or your partner and gently rock your baby. Offer your breast again even if your baby just fed. There is no risk of feeding a breastfed baby too often. If you have had a hard night, try to rest during the day.



How to minimize risk if bed sharing:

- Be aware of your baby and be responsible for your baby's safety while sleeping
- Breastfeed your baby
- Your baby must sleep on his back
- Sleep on a clean, firm mattress with tight fitting sheets and few pillows and blankets
- Place your mattress without a frame in the middle of the room. If this is not possible, be sure to block gaps near the bed that your baby could fall into.
- Make sure there is no furniture close to your mattress and be sure that your headboard, footboard and frame are tight to the mattress.
- Provide a smoke free space. **If either parent smokes**, do not let your baby sleep in bed with you: room sharing is the better option.
- Set your heat a little lower, your body temperature will keep your baby warm enough and too much warmth increases the risk of SIDS.

For further information about safe sleep visit:

https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/safe_sleep_for_babies