

Your sleeping position

If you are sharing a bed with your baby, it is important to make sure that your baby cannot go under the covers or into the pillow.

Most mothers who are breastfeeding automatically sleep facing their baby with their body in a position which protects the baby by stopping him moving up or down the bed (see picture).



Your baby will usually lie on his side to breastfeed. When not actually feeding, he should be put on his back to sleep, never on his front or side.

If you are bottle feeding, the safest place for baby to sleep is in a crib or bassinet next to your bed.

Questions

If you have questions or concerns about sharing a bed with your baby, call a Public Health Services office near you.

Amherst:	667-3319 or 1-800-767-3319
Antigonish:	863-2743
Bridgewater:	543-0850
Dartmouth:	481-5800
New Glasgow:	752-5151
Sydney:	563-2400
Truro:	893-5820
Wolfville:	542-6310
Yarmouth:	742-7141

For more information go to:

- The Canadian Paediatric Society
www.caringforkids.ca

The information in this pamphlet has been adapted with permission from the UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative and the Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths.

The UNICEF UK Baby Friendly Initiative and the Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths created this pamphlet together in order to give parents clear information about both the benefits of bed sharing and the situations in which bed sharing is unsafe.

Aussi disponible en français.

Public Health Services

Sharing a bed with your baby: *A guide for breastfeeding mothers*



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Breastfeeding is best for your baby's health and your own health. The longer you breastfeed, the greater the health benefits for you both.

We recommend that your baby **share a room with you for at least the first 6 months**, as this helps with breastfeeding and reduces the chances of crib death or sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Bringing your baby into bed with you means that you can breastfeed in comfort. This may be why mothers who share a bed with their baby tend to breastfeed for longer than those who don't.

Adult beds are not designed for babies

Babies can die if they get trapped or wedged in the bed or if a parent lies on them. So the safest place for a baby to sleep is in a crib or bassinet by your bed.

If you choose to bring your baby into bed with you or you fall asleep in your bed while breastfeeding, please consider these tips **before** taking your baby into bed with you.



When NOT to sleep with your baby:

- If you (or any other person in the bed) are a smoker, even if you never smoke in bed.
- If you (or any other person in the bed) might find it hard to respond to the baby, for example if you:
 - have drunk alcohol;
 - have taken any drug (legal or illegal) which could make you sleepy;
 - have any illness or condition which affects your awareness of your baby; or
 - are so tired that you think you would find it difficult to respond to your baby.
- Never sleep with your baby on a sofa or armchair.

It is also safest not to share a bed in the early months if your baby was born preterm, was small at birth, has a high temperature, or is under assessment with a health concern.

Tips to reduce the risk of injuries and overheating

- The mattress must be firm and flat - waterbeds, bean bags and sagging mattresses are not suitable;
- Make sure that your baby can't fall out of bed or get stuck between the mattress and the wall;
- The room must not be too hot (16-18°C or 61-64°F is ideal);
- Your baby should not be overdressed – he or she should not wear any more clothes than you wear to bed yourself;
- The covers must not overheat the baby or cover the baby's head;
- Your baby must not be left alone in or on the bed as even very young babies can wriggle into dangerous positions;
- Your partner should know if your baby is in the bed;
- If an older child is also sharing your bed, you or your partner should sleep between the child and the baby;
- Pets should not share a bed with your baby.

Sofas are very dangerous for babies as they can become trapped down the sides or in the cushions. Never lie down or fall asleep with your baby on a sofa or armchair.