

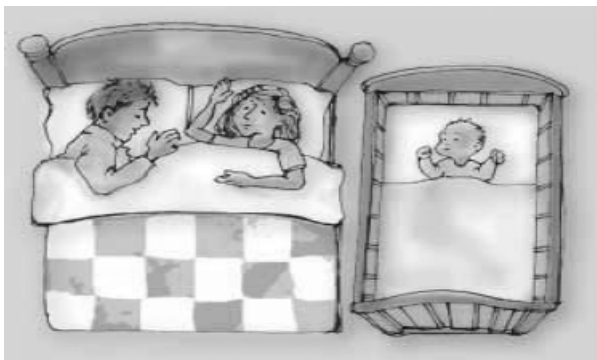
Safe Sleep Habits

Sleep

Sleep is an important and vital part of an infant's physical and emotional well-being. One of the most important things to consider with an infant's sleep is where the child is sleeping and whether the location is safe.

Bed-sharing is common in many countries for various reasons such as developing a secure, physical and emotional setting for the child. However, bed-sharing is not safe and has been linked to unexpected child death. In Ontario from 2006-2007, 41% of all infant deaths involved unsafe sleeping practices.

- **Bed-sharing** – an infant shares the same sleeping surface as the parent.
- **Co-sleeping** – the infant is within arm's reach of their mother, **not** on the same sleeping surface.
- **Room-sharing** – the infant is in the same room, but in their own bed; same as co-sleeping. (Image below)



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Bed-sharing is unsafe. The main reason is that an adult mattress or water bed was not designed with the safety of a child in mind. Here's why:

- A baby can become trapped in the space between the wall and the mattress, or between the mattress and the bed frame.
- The baby could fall off of the bed.
- An adult could roll over and smother the baby.
- Soft bedding, such as a comforter or duvet, can cover the baby's head and cause over-heating and/or suffocation.
- Overheating can increase the risk of an infant dying from SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).

No sleeping situation is totally risk free. The Canadian Paediatric Society recommends that during the first year of life the infant should sleep in their own crib and within the parents' room for the first 6 months of life. Follow these suggestions to help reduce the risks of Sudden Unexpected Infant Death:

- Infants should sleep on their back and in cribs that meet the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) for safety for the first year of life.

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Safe Sleep Habits - continued

- The sleep area must be free of quilts, comforters, bumper pads, pillows and pillow type items. Dressing the child in a sleeper will reduce the need for heavy blankets.
- Exposure to cigarette smoke increases the risk of an infant dying from SIDS.
- Exposure to cigarette smoke either before or after birth increases the risk of SIDS when bed-sharing.
- Sleeping with an infant, or letting an infant sleep in any type of couch, recliner or cushioned chair is very dangerous. It increases the chance a child may smother.

Sources:

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Sleep Sleep for Babies. [Internet]. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Paediatric Society.; c2007 [cited 2008 Aug 11]. Available from <http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/pregnancy&babies/Safesleepforbaby.htm>

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