

The Dangers of Co-Sleeping

Some parents believe sleeping with their baby will protect the baby from harm, but sleeping with a baby is **dangerous** and actually **raises the risk** of infant death.

Even if your baby is breastfed and you don't smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs or other medications, sleeping with your baby still **increases your baby's risk of suffocation or strangulation while sleeping.**

Don't Risk It.

The only way to protect your baby from higher risk is to have your baby sleep in a crib, alone and on their back.

Suffocation and strangulation in an adult bed is the **leading cause of injury-related death** for infants under one year of age in the state of Florida.

The risk of sleeping-related infant death is **40 times higher** for babies who sleep in adult beds compared to babies who sleep in their own cribs.



Sleeping Hours

Newborns may sleep **10-18 hours a day**, and they may wake to eat every 2-4 hours. By 8 weeks old, your baby's sleep may become more predictable.

Babies between 3 and 6 months old need **12-15 hours of sleep** per day, which includes 2-4 naps. **Babies 6 months old and older** are able to sleep through most of the night but will still need 1-2 naps during the day, and many will need at least one nighttime feeding.

According to sleep research, regular naps during the day will **improve** your baby's sleep during the night. When and how long a baby should nap varies from one baby to the next. As babies grow, they will take fewer and shorter naps until they reach 3-4 years of age.



Safe Sleep for Your Baby

A guide to creating the best sleeping conditions for your baby



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The Crib

- Make sure baby's crib, bassinet, cradle, or portable crib is undamaged and meets **current standards** (www.cpsc.gov).
- Put baby's crib, cradle, or bassinet close to your bed for their first year of life.
- Make sure the baby's mattress is firm, flat (not inclined), and fits snugly in its frame. Use **only** the mattress that comes with the crib.
- Make sure the baby's sheet fits tightly around the mattress.
- Keep the baby's sleeping area away from all loose strings (e.g., blind cords, electrical cords, and clothing).
- Lower the baby's mattress when your baby learns to sit, and again when they learn to stand to **prevent falling** out.
- If you see a rash or redness on their skin, your baby may be allergic to a fabric, laundry detergent, or fabric softener, which could keep them from sleeping. **Change their clothes and bedding and switch laundry products.**



Your Baby

- Place your baby face-up to sleep. Sleeping on the stomach or side **increases the risk of suffocation.**
- Tell everyone who takes care of your baby how to keep your baby safe during sleep.
- **Respond** to your baby's cries during the night.
- Offer your baby a pacifier (never a bottle) when placing your baby down to sleep. The pacifier should not be put back if it is spit out during sleep. If the baby does not want the pacifier, **do not force it** and never hold it in place.
- **Always** hold the bottle when feeding your baby, since propping a bottle can lead to choking or death.
- Always put your baby in their crib to sleep with a **dry diaper**; a wet diaper can cause a baby to wake up.
- **Drool stains** on the crib sheet, **drool rash** on their cheeks/chin, or **swollen gums** may be signs they're having **teething trouble** while trying to sleep. If you think this is the case for your baby, **ask your pediatrician** how you should relieve the pain.

The Room

- To keep baby from overheating, make the temperature in baby's room comfortable enough for a lightly clothed adult.
- Hang the baby's mobile out of reach and remove it once they learn to sit up.
- **Avoid** exposing your baby to smoke, alcohol, or drugs.
- "The safest place for an infant to sleep is alone in a crib, in the parents' room for the first year of life." -*American Academy of Pediatrics*
- **Use dark shades** over any windows near your baby's crib. Streetlights or early morning sun may wake a baby.

Having Trouble?

There might be a medical reason for your baby's restless nights, so it's best to ask your pediatrician for advice.

Tell the doctor if your baby:

- Seems to have pain in their belly
- Was a good sleeper but suddenly became a restless sleeper
- Has never slept well
- Seems like they could be sick
- Cries a lot for no reason and nothing works to comfort them
- Has trouble breathing
- Shows changes in behavior because they aren't sleeping

