



Co-Sleeping Benefits

By Judy Arnall

In many parts of the world, parents and babies sleep together. It is a viable sleeping option for parents, babies and children of all ages.

Benefits of Co-sleeping

- Parents and baby have close emotional and physical bonding time.
- Mom gets more sleep as she can attend to baby's needs while both are still somewhat not fully awake. Mom and baby can get back to sleep faster.
- Baby barely wakes to feed, but can easily attach to the breast, so she goes back to sleep faster.
- Mom and baby's breathing cycle adjusts to be in sync with each other. May offer SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) protection by keeping baby's breathing adjusted to moms and preventing deep sleep for babies where they may forget to breathe.
- Dad has the ability to provide warmth and bonding time with baby, in order to give mom a break.
- Touch between parent and baby is necessary survival need.
- Provides easier access for on-demand nursing.
- Provides psychological and emotional health for baby in that they develop trust and security that their needs will be met anytime in the daytime or nighttime of the first year.

Risks

- Baby could be suffocated or entrapped in the first year by Mom, Dad, siblings, pets, bedding or surroundings. For safer co-sleeping, and to minimize risks of suffocation, see tips in the "Safer Co-sleeping" article.

Myths

- Babies and children will find it so cozy that they may never leave the bed to go to sleep in their own bed.

It's true that babies and young children love to sleep with their parents. It makes them feel safe, secure, happy, contented and loved. Some children have longer dependency needs than others and may stay until preschool and school aged. Other children are fiercely independent and may want to share a bed with siblings or sleep on their own. Research consistently shows that the sooner a child's security needs are met, the faster they become independent, so it's in the child's and parent's best interests to let the child decide when and where they will sleep alone.

- Parents will never have sex.

Many parents move the child to their own bed after they fall asleep and then have time and space to be romantic. Other parents choose the guest room or sofa to have sex. Variety of settings, adds spice and excitement to the relationship.

- Children can feel too psychologically powerful if they sleep with parents.

There are no studies that show that co-sleeping does a baby or child any emotional or psychological harm.

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