



In Your Bed: Should Baby Sleep There?

When parents and children sleep in the same bed, it's called a "family bed," or cosleeping. This is a controversial topic with many experts and parents. How can a couple have intimacy when a child is in their bed? Once a baby is used to being in your bed, how do you get her out? Is it safe for a newborn? Many parents choose to bring their newborns to bed for easier nighttime feedings. But once that routine is established, it's often hard to move an older baby out.

Arguments for the Family Bed...

- Nursing mothers who sleep with their babies get more sleep because late-night feedings mean just rolling over.
- Some studies have shown that babies who sleep with their parents have a lower rate of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Cosleeping allows extra time for bonding with your baby.

Arguments Against...

- There's a danger that a newborn could be suffocated.
- Studies have shown that 50 percent of children who share the family bed have sleeping problems, whereas only 15 percent of children who sleep in their own beds have sleeping problems.
- The parents may not sleep well because they're aware of the baby's every movement.
- It's usually difficult for the baby to make the move into his own bed later.



When and How to Move Baby Out

If you bring your baby into your bed, you'll eventually want her to sleep alone. A good time to make that transition might be when she can sleep through the night on her own, sometime between the third and sixth month.

- You can gradually move her out by first putting her in a bassinet next to your bed, then moving it outside your door and eventually putting her in her own crib.
- A familiar bedtime routine makes any change easier. Do the usual bedtime activities—bathing, reading, cuddling—then move her into her own bed.
- When she's in her own bed, stay with her for a while as reassurance, maybe until she falls asleep. Be sure to leave her with some comforting object, such as a toy or blanket.
- Make sure there's plenty of time for cuddling and snuggling during the day. This will help take the emphasis off cuddling in bed.