We’re not sure who came up with the expression, ‘sleep like a baby,’ but we’re pretty sure it wasn’t the parent of a newborn. Babies can fuss when you put them to bed, they can wake up often in the night and they can cry more than you ever imagined. Sadly, a small number of babies die in their sleep unexpectedly or accidentally. The sleeping arrangements you choose are very important for giving your baby the safest sleep possible. Here are some things to talk about with your health-care provider.

### Back to Sleep

Put your baby to sleep on his/her back for every sleep, whether it’s naptime or nighttime.

### Firm Mattress Free of Hazards

To reduce the risk of suffocation, put your baby to sleep on a firm mattress with a tight-fitting sheet and no bumper pads, pillows, heavy blankets, comforters, quilts or toys in the sleep space.

### Crib or Bassinet

Put your baby to sleep in a Health Canada approved crib, cradle or bassinet. (If you’re unsure about yours, talk to your health-care provider). This is the safest place for a baby to sleep. Plan ahead to make sure that there will always be a safe place for your baby to sleep, even when you are travelling or are away from home. Examples of alternative safe sleep surfaces are given on the next page.

### Sharing Your Room

Having your baby sleep on a separate sleep surface in the same room as you for the first six months helps keep your baby safe.
Smoke-free
Avoiding smoking during pregnancy and keeping your home smoke-free before and after the birth helps prevent sleep-related infant death.

Breastfeeding
Breastfeeding helps prevent sleep-related infant death. Any amount of breast milk will give your baby’s immune system a boost and help keep him/her healthy.

Avoid Overheating
Babies like to be warm but not hot. For sleeping, you can keep the room temperature comfortable (around 18 degrees C) and use a thin, lightweight blanket, sleep sack or blanket-weight sleeper. There’s no need to swaddle or put a hat on indoors.

Don’t fall asleep with your baby on a couch or recliner. This is not safe.
If you doze off, your baby could slip between your body and the cushions and suffocate, or fall to the floor. Have a baby bed or bassinet ready, or ask someone else to take the baby if you’re getting sleepy. It is NEVER safe for a baby to sleep on a couch or chair (alone or with a parent).

Don’t leave your baby asleep in a car seat once you have reached your destination. This is not safe.
Car seats are designed for safety when traveling in a car. Take your baby out of the car seat once you have reached your destination and put him/her to sleep in a safe place. Examples of alternative safe sleep surfaces are given on this page.

Don’t leave your baby alone in an adult bed. This is not safe.
Adult beds are not designed to keep babies safe. Even a very young infant can wiggle in to a dangerous position.

Alternative Safe Sleep Surfaces:
The bottom of these sleep surfaces needs minimal covering. You can use a light blanket wrapped around and taped to the bottom of a sturdy piece of card-board. Ensure the surface is firm and flat and placed on the floor.

» Washtub

» Box or carton

» Basket

» Drawer

Make every sleep a safer sleep, day or night…
… so you can sleep soundly too.

18°C

Safer Sleep for my Baby: Helping Parents and Caregivers Create a Safer Sleep Plan
### Take the Bedsharing Quiz

Sharing a bed with your baby can be risky. If you think you might ever share a bed, or even if you don’t plan to do so, here are some questions to ask yourself to make sure your bed is as safe as possible for your baby:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quiz Questions</th>
<th>Yes or No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you or anyone in your household ever smoke?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking increases your baby’s risk of sleep-related death, especially while bedsharing. For support in quitting smoking, visit <a href="http://www.quitnow.ca">www.quitnow.ca</a>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Have you or your partner recently drunk any alcohol?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavier sleep after drinking alcohol increases the risk that you will roll over onto your baby, which can cause suffocation. It’s best to have another adult on hand to help with your baby if you have drunk any alcohol.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Did you smoke when you were pregnant?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoking during pregnancy increases your baby’s risk of sleep-related death, especially while bedsharing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Have you or your partner recently used any drugs or taken any medicine that might make you sleep heavily?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heavier sleep increases the risk that you or your partner will roll over onto your baby, which can cause suffocation. It’s best to have another adult on hand to help with your baby if you have taken any drugs or medicines that make you less alert.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Was your baby born premature (before 37 weeks) or small-at-birth (weighing less than 2.5 kg or 5.5 lbs at birth)?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premature and small-at-birth babies have an increased risk of sleep-related death when sharing a bed, even with parents who don’t smoke.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**If you answered YES** to any of those questions, then bedsharing is especially risky for your baby. Your health-care provider can help you develop a safer sleep plan for your baby.

**If you answered NO** to all of those questions review the checklist on the next page and continue reading.
Other Resources:
If you have any questions about safe infant sleep, your healthcare provider can help you build a safer sleep plan that works for your family and respects your cultural traditions.

For more information on baby care and parenting, visit the Healthy Families BC website:
www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/parenting

HealthLink BC:
Trusted health information is just a phone call or a click away. HealthLink BC gives you quick and easy access to non-emergency health information and services. You can speak with a nurse, pharmacist, dietitian or other health professional to get advice, and find health services and resources near you.

Phone: 8-1-1
www.healthlinkbc.ca

Bedsharing and Breastfeeding

Most mothers who breastfeed their baby in bed will naturally sleep facing their baby with their knees drawn up under the baby’s feet and arm above the baby’s head. This protects the baby from moving down under the covers or up under the pillow.

If you have never breastfed and/or do not naturally sleep in this position with your baby, it is safer for your baby to sleep on his/her own sleep surface in your room.

Bedsharing Checklist

- Baby is far away from any pillows and duvets/blankets.
- Baby sleeps on his/her back.
- Baby is not swaddled.
- The mattress is on the floor to reduce the risk of falls. The mattress is firm and clean (no waterbeds, pillow tops, feather beds, or sagging mattresses).
- Baby sleeps on the outside of the bed, not between parents.
- There is space around the bed so your baby cannot get trapped between the mattress and the wall or bedside table.
- Both parents are aware that baby is in the bed and are comfortable with this decision.
- If either parent has long hair, they tie it back so it can't get tangled around the baby's neck.
- Other children or pets aren't sharing the bed with the baby.

It is NEVER safe to leave your baby alone in the bed. Adult beds aren’t designed to keep babies safe.