

Sleeping with Your Baby: Know the Risks

Did you know that sleeping with your baby can be dangerous?

Parents choose to sleep with their babies believing it is good for them, often not knowing it can result in the injury or suffocation death of their child. In addition, there is no scientific proof that sleeping with your baby lowers the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), also known as “crib death”.



Safe Nursery Action Group Members:

Nicole Vesely
Safe Kids Coordinator
American Family
Children's Hospital
(608) 890-8998

Nan Peterson
Child Health Advocacy
American Family
Children's Hospital

Daniel Stattelmann-Scanlan
Amy Vieth
Public Health -
Madison/Dane County

Rishelle Englebretson
Kohl's Injury Prevention
& Safe Kids

Jim Savage
Kohl Safety Center

Michelle Reinen
WI DATCP

Injury Facts

In Dane County (1994-2002):

- Almost ¾ (16 deaths) of unintentional suffocation deaths of children under age 2 occurred while sleeping with another person.
- In all cases, the child was trapped between a person and a mattress or a couch.

In the US (1999 to 2001):

- Most of the 100 suffocation deaths of children under age 2 involved adult beds.

The Risks

- Suffocation from adults or other children rolling onto baby.
- Suffocation caused by a baby rolling from back to tummy, because of the weight of an adult body on the bed.
- Suffocation from multiple babies (twins) sharing a crib has occurred.

Other Risks of Adult Beds

- Baby being trapped between bed and wall, another object, footboard, or couch cushions.
- Suffocation in waterbeds or soft bedding (pillows, sheepskin, blankets, quilts & comforters).
- Falls from bed onto mounds of clothing, plastic bags or other soft materials or objects that can suffocate your baby.

Baby Doll Examples



Trapped between Bed & Wall



Trapped between Bed & Object



Trapped in Footboard

Safer Alternatives to Sleeping with Your Baby

- Every infant should sleep in a separate crib.
- Move the crib or bassinet next to your bed, or consider using a “co-sleeper” - an infant bed that attaches to an adult bed.
- Keep the baby in a crib and sleep on the floor or a cot in the baby's room.

Either way, the baby will still be within reach!

Informational Resources:

US Consumer Product
Safety Commission
www.cpsc.gov

American Academy of
Pediatrics
www.aap.org

Safe Kids Worldwide
www.safekids.org

Dept of Agriculture, Trade
& Consumer Protection
www.datcp.state.wi.us