

# Where Should My Baby Sleep?

**The Department of Health's recommendation is that the safest place for your baby to sleep is on its back in a cot next to the parents' bed.** If you are thinking about sleeping with your baby, the following will help you decide.



Do either of the parents have any risk factors?	
Smoking	yes / no
Consuming alcohol before bed	yes / no
Medication or drugs affecting sleep pattern	yes / no
Tiredness affecting ability to respond to baby	yes / no
Illness affecting your responses	yes / no
Baby premature or low birth weight	yes / no

## Dummies:

There are benefits and drawbacks to their use but most importantly they should not be used until breastfeeding has been established at about 4 – 6 weeks.

Never attach a neck cord to a dummy.

## Considerations:

- You can miss your baby's feeding cues.
- It interferes with speech development.
- However, it may protect against cot death when used for all sleeps.

Remove from use after 6 months

ALL answers 'No'

ANY answers 'Yes'?

Breastfeeding

Formula Feeding

**Sharing a bed with your baby when any of these factors are present, significantly increases the risk of cot death**

It is not recommended that you co-sleep with your baby when breastfeeding and introducing formula feeds

Evidence suggests that there is some benefit to bed sharing as this can prolong breastfeeding and for better sleep.  
**Please see bed sharing guidance overleaf**

**A free e-learning course about keeping baby safe is available for all parents. It's available at libraries and at**  
<http://nhsdorset.safeguardingchildren.co.uk>  
**PASSWORD IS: Dorsetsafesleep**

## How to reduce the risks to your baby if you choose to bed share:

**Remember:** Never lie down or fall asleep with your baby on the sofa as this is **10 times** more likely to result in cot death.

### To prevent your baby overheating, suffocating or becoming trapped in the bed:

- The mattress must be firm and flat – waterbeds, bean bags and sagging mattresses are not suitable.
- Ensure your baby can not fall out of bed or get stuck between the bed and a wall.
- The ideal room temperature is 16 – 18 degrees so baby does not get too hot.
- Your baby does not need to wear any more clothes than you do in bed or he/she will get too hot.
- Ensure the covers do not go over the head of your baby. Use a light blanket over the baby rather than any duvets. Remove all pillows from around the baby.
- Babies wriggle around quite a lot, so never leave your baby alone in the bed.
- If you are sharing your bed with your baby, tell your partner the baby is there.
- Ideally do not have older children in the bed but if they do come into the bed, ensure that you or your partner is between them and the baby.
- Pets should never share a bed with your baby.

Most mothers who are breastfeeding naturally sleep facing their baby with their body in a position that protects the baby from moving up and down the bed.

Your baby will usually feed lying on their side and then should be moved onto their back to asleep.



If you are **formula feeding**; the safest place for your baby to sleep is in a cot by your bed.