CO TO SLEEP BABY

Your safe co-sleeping guide for Beginners

A step by step guide on how to safely co-sleep with your baby

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Welcome to Your Conscious Co-sleeping Journey



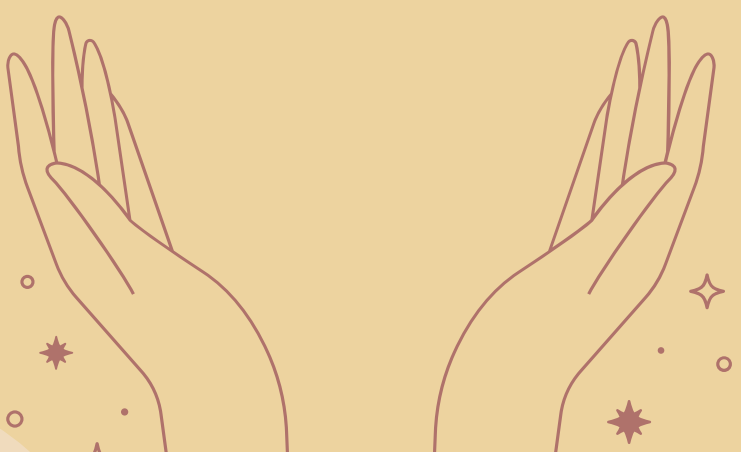
Most of us don't set out with a "plan" to co-sleep. Usually, it happens in the quiet hours of the night when the need for sleep meets the biological instinct to be close to our babies.

I am here to tell you that your desire for closeness is beautiful and normal. Whether you are co-sleeping by design or by necessity, you deserve to do it without guilt and with the best safety information available.

What this guide is: A non-judgmental roadmap to help you protect your rest whilst prioritising your baby's safety. When we move from "accidental" co-sleeping to a "conscious" setup, we create a secure, low-stress environment for the whole family.

"Connection is your baby's first language. This guide is here to help you speak it safely."

"It is not baby sleep that needs fixing - only our understanding of it. Baby humans are biologically wired to stay close to a caregiver... Their need to be close to you is vital for their survival." - Professor Helen Ball



01 THE SAFE SLEEP SEVEN

For bed-sharing to be as safe as possible, it is essential to meet the Safe Sleep Seven criteria. These guidelines, developed by La Leche League, significantly reduce the risks associated with sharing a bed.

A "Safe" family is:

1. Non-smokers: Even if you smoke away from the baby, the residue on skin and hair is a risk factor.

2. Sober: No alcohol or any medication that could make you unusually drowsy.

3. Breastfeeding: Breastfeeding mothers and babies naturally stay in a protective, synchronous sleep position.

A "Safe" Baby is:

4. Healthy: Full-term and healthy.

5. On Their Back: Always place your baby on their back to sleep, never their side or tummy.

6. Lightly Dressed: No hats, heavy sleep bags, or swaddles in the adult bed.

A "Safe" Space is:

7. A Firm Surface: No memory foam, waterbeds, or sofas (sofas are never safe for co-sleeping).

02

Prepping Your Sleep Space

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Co-sleeping safely is all about "stripping back" the environment. Your adult bed was designed for adult comfort, so we need to tweak it for infant safety.

The Mattress: It must be firm and flat. Remove any soft mattress toppers or sheepskins. If your bed frame is high or you are worried about falls, consider placing your mattress directly on the floor.

The "Barrier" Strategy: To ensure your baby cannot roll out of bed, use a side-car cot (securely attached with no gaps) on the baby's side. This acts as a safe barrier while keeping them in their own clear sleep space.

Bedding: Keep pillows to a minimum (one for the parent only). Use a light duvet or blanket and keep it at your waist height, well away from the baby’s face.

Tie it Back: If you have long hair, keep it tied back. Remove any dangling jewellery or necklaces before getting into bed.

The "No" List: No pets or older siblings should be in the immediate sleep space with a baby in the bed.



03

Your Protective Instinct

The C-curl and Intuition

If you are a breastfeeding mother, you likely already find yourself in the Cuddle-curl position. This is nature's way of keeping your baby safe while you both rest. To my bottle-feeding mothers: While the C-curl may not always happen as a subconscious response to nursing, it is a position that can be consciously learned and safely adopted. If you are bottle-feeding, you can master the C-curl by following the same physical cues below:

The C-Position: You lie on your side, facing your baby. Your lower arm is stretched out above the baby's head (preventing them from moving up) and your knees are tucked up (preventing them from moving down). This creates a protective "bubble" where the baby is level with your breasts and away from your pillows.

Biological Synchrony: When you co-sleep, your sleep cycles often align with your baby's. You will find you are more aware of their movements and breathing. Whilst this instinct is strongest in breastfeeding mothers, partners can still be supportive by ensuring the environment stays safe and by helping with changes or "burping" breaks.



04

The Journey of Shared Sleep

Sleep is not a straight line. Some nights will feel seamless, and others might feel like a bit of a "wobble." That is completely okay.

When nights feel challenging, remember these core truths:

Flexibility is a Strength: Safe co-sleeping isn't "all or nothing." Some families co-sleep for the first stretch of the night and use a side-car cot for the second, or vice versa. Do what works for your family's rest.

The Power of Coregulation: When your baby wakes, they look to your nervous system to calm theirs. By being right next to them, you can soothe them with a touch or a whisper before they reach a state of full distress.

Trust Your Instincts: You are the world's leading expert on your baby. If something feels "off" in your setup, give yourself permission to reassess and adjust.

Remember by choosing a conscious, safe setup, you are honouring your baby's need for proximity whilst giving yourself the best chance at a restful night. As your baby grows, their needs will change, and your sleep setup will evolve with them.

Co-sleeping is a season, not a forever. Whether you share a bed for four months or four years, the foundation of trust you are building now will stay with them for a lifetime.

05

Recommended Reading & Resources

If you want to dive deeper into the science of infant sleep and biological norms, these experts and organisations offer the most reliable, evidence-based research:

Resource/Author
Professor Helen Ball Author of How Babies Sleep: A Factful Guide to the First 365 Days and Nights (2025). Her work focuses on "biologically normal" sleep and why babies aren't designed to sleep alone.

Dr. James McKenna, Founder of the Mother-Baby Behavioral Sleep Lab; the world's leading expert on the biology of "Cosleeping" and breastfeeding

BASIS (Baby Sleep Info Source)A project led by Prof. Helen Ball. It provides research-based evidence for parents and health professionals on safe bed-sharing and sleep ecology.

Lyndsey Hookway, Pediatric Nurse, Health Visitor, and IBCLC. Author of Holistic Sleep Coaching and Still Awake. I am proud to have trained under Lyndsey for my qualification in Holistic Infant Sleep. Her evidence-based, responsive approach is the foundation of my practice.

The Lullaby TrustThe UK’s authority on SIDS prevention. Their "Safer Sleep" guidelines are vital for every parent to read.

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BIOLOGICAL SLEEP



TRUSTING YOUR INSTINCTS

KATIE SWIFT

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