

MESSAGE FOR B.C. FEDERATION OF YOUTH IN CARE NETWORK PUBLICATION

Safe Sleeping for You and Your Baby

You need to carefully choose where your baby sleeps. There are many ways to help you and your baby sleep well and safely.

Things you can do to keep your baby safe:

- **Always put your baby on his back to sleep. This is very important!**
- Your baby should sleep on a firm, flat mattress.
- Use a crib that meets safety standards.

Things you need to know when choosing where your baby sleeps:

- Be sure your baby will not fall out of bed. There should be no spaces between the mattress and the headboard, walls, or other surfaces that can trap your baby.
- Do not leave your baby alone on an adult bed or let other children sleep in the same bed as your baby.

Make sure your baby does not get too warm. Use only a light blanket to cover him. Do not swaddle (wrap snugly in a blanket) or cover your baby's head with the blanket.

Do not use:

- Sheep skins
- Pillows
- Comforters
- Stuffed toys
- Bumper pads

These things can stop good air circulation around your baby's face. Plastics, such as the mattress wrapping, may also prevent air circulation. These should be removed to reduce the risk of SIDS and suffocation.

Do not let your baby sleep (with you or on her own) on soft surfaces:

- Waterbeds
- Couches or sofas
- Recliner chairs
- Pillows
- Down comforters
- Beanbag chairs

Co-sleeping is when your baby sleeps in the same room as you do, but not in the same bed. Having your baby share your room, particularly at night, may help lower the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Being close can also help to calm your baby if she is unsettled, and makes it easier to breastfeed.

Bed-sharing means the baby shares the same sleep surface with another person, usually a parent. In many areas of the world it is a common practice for mothers to sleep with their babies so they can watch them, breastfeed them, and be near them. Sometimes you may decide to have your baby sleep beside your bed and at other times have your baby share your bed.

The Canadian Pediatric Society (CPS) released recommendations in 2004 that discourage bed-sharing for the first year of life. Sharing a bed with your baby can increase your risk of smothering your baby, especially if you are very tired or have been drinking alcohol or using drugs. The CPS also knows that some parents will choose to share a bed with their baby.

You should not share a bed with a baby if you (or any other person in the bed):

- Are a smoker, or the baby is exposed to second-hand smoke
- Have been drinking alcohol or using drugs
- Have taken any medicines that could make you extra sleepy
- Are very tired, to the point where you would not be able to respond to the baby
- Are ill or have a medical condition that might make it difficult to respond to the baby
- Have long hair that is not tied back
- Are unusually heavy (obese)

Source: *Baby's Best Chance: Parents' Handbook of Pregnancy and Baby Care*, Revised Sixth edition, 2005, Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Health, Victoria, B.C.

For further information, contact:

Your local Public Health Unit. You can find contact information by going to the Health Authority website, under public health services:

<http://www.healthservices.gov.bc.ca/socsec/>

To find out about the public health unit closest to you:

- Click on your region
- Click on "Finding Care"
- Click on "Community Services Directory"
- Search "Public Health Unit"

The Canadian Pediatric Society:

<http://www.cps.ca/english/statements/cp/cp04-02.htm>

For information about crib safety standards:

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/cons/crib-lits/crib-lits01_e.html