

Co-Sleeping With Baby

7 Benefits of Co-Sleeping with Baby

Our first three babies were easy sleepers. Then along came our fourth child, Hayden. Hayden hated her crib. Finally one night, out of sheer exhaustion my wife, Martha, brought Hayden into our bed. From that night on we all slept better. We slept so happily together that we did it for four years, until the next baby was born! Nowadays, more and more parents are discovering the joys of what we call “co-sleeping,” either sleeping with baby alongside them in bed or utilizing a bedside bassinet (such as those available at www.armsreach.com.) Here are 7 of my favorite benefits of co-sleeping with baby.

1. Babies Sleep and Stay Asleep Better

Nighttime is a scary time for little people. Co-sleeping with baby will create less nighttime separation anxiety between mother and child. A calmer baby sleeps better.

2. Mothers and Infants Achieve Nighttime Harmony

Mothers also sleep better because their closeness helps them not worry about their baby. Co-sleeping mothers and babies get their sleep cycles in a synchrony called nighttime harmony. When baby is about to awaken, mother gives her familiar presence, or close-by touch, which conveys a reassuring “it’s okay, go back to sleep” message to baby.

3. Breastfeeding is Easier

Co-sleeping with baby allows easier access to the hungry baby. When baby is sleeping close-by in a co-sleeper, mother is able to easily get baby in and out for comforting and feeding, oftentimes without either member of the nursing pair fully awakening. Certainly this is much easier on mother and baby than having to get out of bed and go across the room or into another room to comfort a crying baby. By that time both mother and baby are wide awake and upset, and may have difficulty going back to sleep. On the other hand, co-sleeping enables both members of the nursing pair to get back to sleep more quickly.

4. Co-Sleeping with Baby fits with Busy Lifestyles

Sleeping close to each other allows mother and baby to reconnect and make up for any “touch-time” they missed during the day. This is why the Arm’s Reach Co-Sleeper is an especially valuable nighttime parenting tool for working parents.

5. Easier for Baby to Grow

Babies who cry less, grow better. When co-sleeping with baby, they cry less so they can divert the energy that they would have wasted on crying into growing. One of the oldest “treatments” for babies who are not growing optimally is “sleep close to your baby.”

6. Parents and Infants Become more Connected

Co-sleeping with baby enhances parent-infant bonding. Because you have X hours of nighttime touch and comforting, co-sleeping allows family intimacy. Parents have their own sleeping space, baby has his or her own sleeping space, yet parents are close by baby to fulfill nighttime needs.

7. Infants Develop Healthy Sleep Habits

Co-sleeping helps your baby develop a healthy sleep attitude. Baby grows up regarding sleep as a pleasant state to enter and a fearless state to remain in. This healthy sleep attitude is one of the best lifelong investments you can make.

For more in-depth discussion about the scientific and practical benefits of sleeping close to your baby consult one of our books: [The Baby Book](#), [The Baby Sleep Book](#), or [The Attachment Parenting Book](#).

We wish your family a restful night's sleep!

William Sears, MD, FRCP

<http://www.askdrsears.com/topics/health-concerns/sleep-problems/cosleeping-with-baby>

