



5 Reasons Why Your Baby's Sleep Environment Isn't Safe & How to Change It

The safety of your baby's sleep environment should be a concern up until the age of one . This is when SIDS risk is the highest and your baby will rarely know how to respond in an emergency situation. Some babies may be more advanced than others but it's always better to be "safe than sorry".

Keep in mind that once your baby reaches the age of 1, it is your complete decision of how you'd like your baby to sleep, but if you follow safety guidelines until they are 1 years old then your baby will have fewer sleep props and healthier sleep habits. The need to change their sleep environment will hardly be necessary.



1. Co-sleeping

The definition of co-sleeping is sleeping with your baby in the same area such as a couch, a bed, or even on the floor. This can even be having your baby next to your bed in a co-sleeper that attaches to the bed.

There are very high risks with co-sleeping and it can be very dangerous. It's recommended that you don't co-sleep because you won't always be aware of what's going on when you are asleep, even if you think you sleep lightly.

Some of the risks that are associated with co-sleeping are:

- suffocation from mom and dad rolling on baby
- suffocation or strangulation from loose blankets
- baby rolling off the bed/couch/lap
- baby rolling between parent's mattress and co-sleeper
- increases the risk of SIDS

Co-sleeping is often a survival mode for parents because they are so exhausted and their baby won't sleep anywhere else despite what they have tried. The newborn stage can be very exhausting so reach out to someone that can help you out with the baby while you get some rest.

Room sharing is not the same as co-sleeping and is recommended until the age of 6 months to reduce the risk of SIDS. This means having your baby in a crib, bassinet or pack and play, in the same room where you are sleeping. This can be a safe and comforting alternative to co-sleeping.



- Your baby is still within hearing distance.
- It's easy to just look over and see that your little one is sleeping soundly and safely.
- Your baby is still close, but not close enough to harm.
- You won't have to face the exhaustion of trying to get them to sleep in their own bed when they are older.

By continuing to put your baby down in their own sleep space, it helps both of you long term. They will get more and more comfortable with their own sleep space the more you offer it to them.

2. Temperature

Babies have a very hard time regulating their body temperature so it's important to make sure their sleep environment is at a safe temperature.

Be careful how you dress your baby. They should only have one more layer of clothing than you would wear, no hats after the day of birth, and you can frequently check the back of your baby's neck to make sure they aren't sweating. If your little one is sweating, he/she is too hot.

If you are using sleep sacks, check the temperature rating or TOG on them to make sure your room is set to a good temperature for the thickness of the sleep sack.

A good temperature for your baby's room is between 68-71°F (20-22°C).

Often in the summer the baby's room will get quite hot. You can keep a fan running in the room but make sure it isn't blowing directly on your baby.



3. Objects in the crib (pack and play/bassinet)

Your baby should be sleeping alone. That means no stuffed animals, blankets, toys, bumper pads, pillows, etc.

These can be a risk for suffocation or a strangling hazard.

Nothing should be hanging over the crib for sleep, such as a mobile, as there is a risk of it falling onto your baby. (Not only for safety but they can be quite stimulating for your little ones that are trying to sleep) These are ok during awake times while having supervised playtime.

Again, once your little one reaches 1 year old, you can introduce blankets and stuffed animals to them. But until then, it's a huge safety risk.

I understand parents often want to see their little ones form an attachment to a teddy or a blanket, and they feel they need comfort from it. Your baby doesn't know any different though. If you don't introduce it to them, they won't miss it. Once it's safe to do so, they can form an attachment as they get older when it will mean more to them and can choose a teddy or blanket they love.

If your little one is already sleeping with a blanket and you're worried if you take it away, they won't sleep, I recommend trying a sleep sack.

4. Sleeping in swings or car seats

Anything that puts your baby in a "chin to chest" position can cause your baby's airway to be blocked and make it harder for them to breathe. If they are in this position for a long period of time it can cause suffocation. Also known as asphyxiation.

Babies should be placed on a firm, flat mattress. Nothing can curve around their bodies or cause their head to be put in the "chin to chest" position.



There will be times that your baby falls asleep in the car seat or stroller and it's completely unavoidable and impossible to prevent that from happening. Just be careful to not make this a routine and keep them there for long periods of time. This will also help them from creating a "sleep prop" that will be hard to break later on.

There may be times where your baby will NOT sleep at all and you are to the point where you are going to fall asleep no matter what position they are in, so in those cases the swing is a much safer option.

Use them only for when it's the safer option or unavoidable, not for a permanent sleeping place.

IF your baby falls asleep in the car seat and it's time for you to go home, it's best to try and transfer them into their bed if you know they are going to continue having a long sleep.

IF your baby falls asleep in the swing because you need some sleep, set an alarm so that they don't end up sleeping there the whole night or most of the day. Also make sure they are buckled in so they will not fall out.

IF your baby will not fall asleep anywhere else but these two places, try a baby carrier. This way you can have your hands free and get some things done (housework, grocery shopping) or go for a walk or have a coffee date knowing they are in a safe sleeping position.

5. Products advertised as "breathable"

You may see many baby products marketed as "breathable" or "made with breathable fabric". Some examples are mesh bumper pads, or the Dock-A-Tot/Nests.

The term "breathable" doesn't actually mean that your baby will be able to breathe through it. It means that moisture vapor is able to pass through, not that one will be able



to place it over their mouth and be able to breathe.

Often parents use mesh bumper pads because of their little one's legs and arms getting stuck in the slats of the crib. I would suggest using a sleep sack instead to prevent this from happening. Also, double check that your crib isn't outdated because the slats have been made smaller now to prevent this from happening.

If your little one is having a hard time adjusting to this new safe sleep environment, or adjusting to being home for the first time in their safe sleep environment, let's set up a time to connect. We will talk about your baby's sleep struggles, and any other fears you may have so that you can get your little one sleeping serenely while you rest at ease knowing they are safe.

You can schedule a FREE 20 minute "Sleep Easy" call by clicking [here](#).