

Sleeping with Parents (Bed-Sharing) - How To End It

Definition

- Your child sleeps with you during all or part of the night
- You want to stop sharing your bed with your child
- This is also called co-sleeping

Health Information

Cause

- Sleeping with the parents easily becomes a bad habit.
- Children do not need to sleep with you to be happy and secure. But, they sure like it.
- And once it has begun, it is a privilege that they don't want to give up.

Care Advice

1. **Establish a New Rule About Staying in Child's Bedroom at Night:**
 - Tell your child the new rule: "Starting tonight, I want you to stay in your bed during the night. The doctor says you are too old to sleep with me anymore. You have your bed and I have mine."
 - Also, remind your child that it is not polite to wake up people who are sleeping, unless you are sick or it's an emergency.
2. **Reward Good Bedtime Behavior:**
 - Give your child an incentive for changing his bedtime behavior.
 - For being a "good sleeper" who stays in his bedroom all night, give him a special treat with breakfast.
 - An example is a serving of ice cream or a special cartoon show.
 - The average child will change his behavior for something he really wants. You just need to be creative.
3. **Close Door if Your Child Leaves His Bedroom:**
 - If your child leaves his bedroom, take him back immediately.
 - If he does it again, close his door until he's in his bed.
 - Tell him that you'll be happy to leave the door open if he stays in his bedroom.
 - Do open it every 5 to 10 minutes and say something comforting and loving.
4. **Take Him Back to Bed if Comes Into Your Bed:**
 - If your child tries to crawl into your bed during the night, don't let him.
 - Order him back to his own bed using a firm voice.
 - If he doesn't go on his own, take him back immediately. Tuck him in quickly and say good night in a loving way.
 - If your child gets into your bed while you are asleep, take him back to his room as soon as you discover him.
5. **Use Signaling Device if Parent is Deep Sleeper:**
 - If you are a deep sleeper, consider using a signaling device on your door that will awaken you.
 - Examples are a chair placed against your door or a bell attached to your doorknob.
 - Some parents simply lock their bedroom door.

6. **What to Expect:**

- Be firm and you can win back restful sleep and the privacy of your bed. It may take a week.
- Expect some crying and protest during this sleep training.
- Young children normally cry when they don't get their way.

Call Your Doctor If

- Your child is not sleeping well after you try this program for 2 weeks
- You have other questions or concerns

Pediatric Care Advice

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