

Where infants sleep may affect how long they are breastfed

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Credit: Anna Langova/public domain

A new study indicates that mothers who frequently sleep, or bed-share, with their infants consistently breastfeed for longer than mothers who do not bed-share. Also, pregnant women who expressed a strong motivation to breastfeed were more likely to bed-share frequently once their baby was born.

The findings, which come from a study of 678 women in a randomized breastfeeding trial who were recruited at mid-pregnancy, question whether recommendations to avoid bed-sharing due to concerns such as sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) may impede some women from achieving their breastfeeding goals and could thereby prevent women and their children from experiencing all of the short- and long-term benefits of breastfeeding.

"We previously found that mothers who bed-share were twice as likely to breastfeed their baby for at least 6 months than mothers who began breastfeeding but didn't bed-share. In this paper we show that mothers with the strongest intent to breastfeed are the ones who sleep with their [babies](#) the most," said Professor Helen Ball, lead author of the *Acta Paediatrica* study. These [mothers](#) therefore need information on how to make bed-sharing while breastfeeding as safe as possible."

More information: Helen L. Ball et al. Bed-sharing by breastfeeding mothers: who bed-shares and what is the relationship with breastfeeding duration?, *Acta Paediatrica* (2016). [DOI: 10.1111/apa.13354](https://doi.org/10.1111/apa.13354)

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