

Safe Co-Sleeping with Infants Outer Womb – James J. McKenna Pathways #46, page 19



Talking Points

James J. McKenna is the Director at the Mother-Baby Behavioral Sleep Laboratory. He lectures nationally and abroad on the importance of re-conceptualizing what constitutes healthy childhood sleep, and along with his undergraduate students, continues to study family sleeping arrangements and the importance of breast feeding in promoting the health of mothers and infants.

What constitutes as a safe sleep environment?

- As parents, we should be informed and committed to sharing the bed with our baby should we choose it as the right choice for our family. We should be conscious of their presence in bed and assume responsibility.
- McKenna advises that:
 - Infants should be sleeping on their backs with light blanketing and with nothing covering their head.
 - The bed should be somewhat firm, with no gap between the headboard, footboard or wall for the baby to fall into.
 - If a person is on sedatives, medications, drugs or is intoxicated or unable to arouse they should not share the bed with the baby.

For more specific information on bed-sharing, please refer to the full article.

Resources

Full references for each article are available at <http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html>

Professor James J. McKenna’s Mother-Baby Behavioral Sleep Laboratory studies how sleeping environments reflect and respond to family needs—in particular how they affect mothers, breastfeeding, and infants’ physiological and psychological well-being and development. <http://cosleeping.nd.edu/>

Pathways to Family Wellness presents: Co-Sleeping With Infants: Science, Public Policy, and Parents Civil Rights, with James McKenna, PhD: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XCZzqFkyiU>