



# HIGHLANDS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

**Sheriff Paul Blackman**

400 S. Eucalyptus St., Sebring FL 33870  
863-402-7200 | [www.highlandssheriff.org](http://www.highlandssheriff.org)



Scott Dressel, Public Information Officer  
863-991-0851 | [rdressel@highlandssheriff.org](mailto:rdressel@highlandssheriff.org)

## **PRESS RELEASE: Feb. 28, 2017**

### **Infant's death highlights risks of bed sharing**

LAKE PLACID -- A two-month-old boy died in the predawn hours of Tuesday, Feb. 28 while sleeping in bed with his father in their Placid Lakes home.

The father told deputies he had gone to sleep with his son in the bed with him and when he awoke, the child was not breathing. The father moved the boy to the kitchen table and performed CPR, but to no avail. The cause of death has not been determined, but this tragic event serves as a reminder about the dangers involved in sharing a bed with an infant.

Almost every parent has fallen asleep with their baby. The first few months of raising a child can be exhausting. And while most of the time nothing bad happens, it is still best to try to make sure your baby sleeps in a safe place. Sharing a bed with a baby is not recommended. A 2012 study of 8,207 infant deaths from 24 US states in the previous eight years found that 69 percent of infants were bed sharing at the time of death.

The March of Dimes says that bed sharing with an infant should be avoided if at all possible due to the dangers. According to [marchofdimes.org](http://marchofdimes.org), during bed-sharing, a baby can be hurt by:

- Getting trapped by the bed's frame, headboard or footboard.
- Getting stuck between the bed and the wall, furniture or other objects.
- Falling off the bed.
- Being suffocated by pillows, blankets or quilts or from lying facedown.
- Having another person roll on top of him.
- SIDS.

The March of Dimes says about half of all SIDS deaths happen when a baby shares a bed, sofa or sofa chair with another person. To help keep your baby safe from SIDS, the website says don't bed-share if:

- Your baby is younger than 4 months old. This is when a baby is at highest risk of SIDS.
- Your partner or other children sleep in your bed.
- You [smoke](#), even if you don't smoke in bed.
- You're very tired.

- You've had [alcohol](#), used [street drugs](#) or taken certain [prescription medicines](#), like antidepressants, or over-the-counter (also called OTC) medicines, like allergy or cough medicine that may make you sleepy. Taking these things can make it hard for you to wake up or respond to your baby.

If your baby doesn't have his or her own room, it is still best that they sleep in a bassinet or crib. In the same room with you is fine -- even recommended by some. Co-sleeping is the practice of sleeping close enough to your baby that you can hear them if they wake up and easily check on them during the night. It also makes feeding much easier for the parents. There are even bassinets made to attach to the side of the bed for just that purpose.

It is OK to bring your baby into the bed during the night for feeding or to soothe them back to sleep. But always put them back into the crib before going back to sleep.

If you have no other choice but to share a bed with your baby, here are some tips to minimize the risk:

- Get rid of puffy comforters and pillows. They can be a suffocation risk. Use only lightweight blankets.
- Sleep on a firm mattress and make sure it fits tight against the bedframe.
- Position the bed away from the wall, furniture, drapes and cords to eliminate places a baby can get wedged. The majority of bed sharing deaths come from babies getting trapped in bed structures or getting tangled up in cords.
- Never sleep with a baby on a waterbed. Also avoid sleeping on sofas or overstuffed chairs.