



HOME SAFETY

Postpartum Parent Information Booklet

*Leading, Learning,
Caring for You*

Adapted from Health Canada and the
Postpartum Parent Support Program

CREATE A SAFE HOME ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUR BABY

Your new baby's safety depends on you and the rest of the family. Since babies are unable to recognize dangers themselves, they must be protected from situations and objects that may harm them. The physical development of babies increases their access to the world around them. This information helps you understand the possible dangers during your baby's continual development.

Parents always have to be aware of possible dangerous situations and make a safe environment. As your baby grows and develops, his or her needs will change. To help you see possible dangers in your home, crawl on your hands and knees and judge for yourself what could be dangerous for your baby at the various development stages.

Remember – injuries can be prevented!

The safest sleeping position for your baby is on his or her back to help reduce the chance of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).



- Always put your baby on his or her back to sleep, on a firm, flat surface.
- Always make sure no one smokes around your baby.
- Always avoid putting too many clothes and covers on your baby, as your baby can get over-heated.
- Avoid soft mattresses, fluffy pillows, comforters and stuffed toys in your baby's crib or playpen. These could prevent proper air circulation around your baby's face.
- Breastfeed your baby as it may give some protection against SIDS and provides many other life-long health benefits.
- Bumper pads are not necessary nor recommended.

Your baby can develop a flat head (positional plagiocephaly) from always turning his or her head to the same side. A little bit of flattening goes away on its own. More serious flattening may be permanent, but it will not affect a baby's brain or development. A simple way to prevent your baby from getting a flat head is to change the position of the baby's head each day. Babies like to look at something interesting so turn their head to look out into their room rather than toward the wall. Here's how you can change the position of your baby's head while still giving your baby the same view:

- One day, place your baby with his or her head at the head of the crib.
- The next day, place your baby with his or her head at the foot of the crib.
- Each day, alternate your baby's orientation in the crib.
- Babies should also have supervised "tummy time" when they are awake, several times a day. This will help to prevent a flat head. It is also important for your baby's development.
- If your baby still develops a flat head, talk to your doctor.

YOUR BABY SHOULD NEVER BE LEFT ALONE:

- On a table or counter.
- In a baby seat or car seat.
- On a couch, bed, water bed or bunk bed.
- In a bathtub.
- With a pet.
- With a propped bottle as your baby could easily choke. He or she should always be held for feeds.
- With other young children.

Note: No baby should be left in the care of any child under the age of 12.

YOUR BABY WILL SOON LEARN TO ROLL FROM SIDE TO SIDE, THEREFORE:

- Always place your baby in a crib when you are not caring for them.
- Baby equipment must meet current safety standards.
- Cribs and furniture should be placed away from windows to prevent them from becoming entangled in the window cords. Cribs and furniture can pose falling dangers when your baby learns to climb.
- Blinds and curtains with long cords are a strangulation danger to babies. Cords need to be cut as short as possible and must be tied out of the baby's reach.
- Always use the safety belt when a baby or child is in a stroller, baby seat, car seat, high-chair or other baby equipment that have protective straps.

YOUR BABY WILL LEARN TO MOVE THEIR HAND TO THEIR MOUTH AND TRY TO EAT ANYTHING WITHIN REACH, THEREFORE:

- Small objects are a choking hazard to your baby. Always keep small objects such as pins, needles, diaper pins (open or closed), buttons, coins, marbles, and jewellery out of your baby's reach.
- Toys should be age appropriate. They should be large and soft. All parts should be larger than your baby's mouth.
- Keep diapering supplies out of your baby's reach.
- Strings and ribbons are strangulation hazards. Never use them on soothers or pacifiers.
- Any plastic such as bags, wrapping etc. are a suffocation hazard and should be kept out of your baby's reach.
- Always keep sharp objects such as scissors, knives and forks beyond your baby's reach.
- Never drink hot beverages while your baby is in your arms or on your lap as you could accidentally scald or burn your baby.