

Safety

The main cause of death in children is from injuries, most of which are preventable. Remember these important facts about babies:

Sleep Safety

- Always put your baby on his back to sleep until he is 6 months old – this prevents the incidence of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome).

Hands-on Safety

- Babies can roll and crawl off couches, beds, changing tables and chairs. **NEVER leave them unattended!**
- They can be burned by hot drinks, cigarettes, the sun, bath water and bottles heated in the microwave. Be sure to turn your water heater down to 120 degrees F.
- If you have gas in your home, you should have carbon monoxide detectors.
- When you bathe and change your baby, always keep one hand on him when turning or reaching for something. Be sure to use the safety straps on changing tables and bathtubs.
- If you have a pool, you need to have a fence with a self-latching gate to protect your baby. **ALWAYS** watch them around water!
- Be careful using the clip on pacifier holders – they can pinch the baby's skin.
- Keep a careful eye on older children when they are around a baby. Their rough touches may cause injuries, even if the older children do not mean for them to.

Toy Safety

- Give your baby only toys that are too big for him to swallow and too strong for him to break. Always follow the age recommendations that come with toys.
- Never give your baby toys that have sharp edges or points.
- Keep plastic bags and balloons away from your baby and all your children.

Your Baby's World

- The bars on your baby's crib and playpen should be no more than 2 and 3/8 inches apart. You can test this with a soda can: if it fits between the bars, do not use the crib or playpen.
- Mattresses should fit snugly. You should not be able to fit more than 2 fingers between the mattress and crib.
- **Make sure there are no guns in houses where your child lives or visits.**

Car Safety

- Use a rear-facing car seat in the back seat (preferably in the middle) every time your baby rides in a car.
- Recline all rear-facing car seats at a 45 degree angle. A firmly rolled towel under the car seat (feet end) may help with this. If your car seat is also a carrier, always put the handle and hood down when in the car.
- The harness straps should be adjusted so that they come out of the slots at or below the baby's shoulders.
Always adjust the chest clip so that it is at armpit level. The harness straps must be snug. Use this as a test: you should be able to fit only one finger between the straps and the baby's collar bone.
- Babies must ride this way until they are over one year old **and** at least 20 pounds.
- The car seat needs to be tightly secured in the back seat of the car with a seat belt. This means you should not be able to move it more than 1 inch when you tug at the car seat. If you have a hard time installing the car seat, or have any questions, call your local fire department for help.
- Using a car seat will not only keep your baby safe, it is also the law!

Keeping Baby Healthy

- Do not let anyone smoke around your baby! Smoke exposure can lead to more colds and ear infections.
- Do not give your baby left-over formula. It can cause tummy aches and diarrhea.
- Your baby needs protection from serious diseases. Make sure he is immunized.
- Keep your baby away from people with colds or other illnesses.
- Wash your hands frequently, especially after changing diapers or wiping a runny nose.