

# BRINGING HOME BABY: INFANT SAFETY TIPS

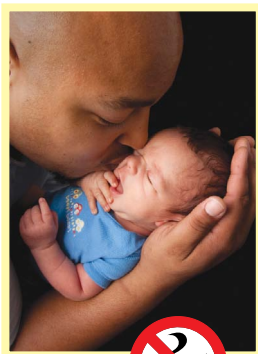
Here are some precautions you can take to keep your baby safe during the first few months from our experts at the Women & Infant Health Center.

## Prepare Your Home

**Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.** Place one on each level of your home and in halls outside bedrooms.

**Test the water temperature.** Set the thermostat for the hot water heater to 1250 to avoid scalding which occurs above 1400.

**Create a smoke-free zone.** Never smoke around the baby as it increases the risk of viral illnesses, asthma and SIDS. If you do smoke, wash your hands, brush your teeth and change your clothes before handling the baby.



**Pet Safety.** Bring home clothing or a blanket with the baby's scent before discharge, so the scent is not foreign. Never leave pets unattended near your new baby or allow them to sleep with the baby.

## Safe Sleeping

**Baby's own sleeping space.** Baby should have a separate sleeping space — whether in a crib, bassinette or cradle. A firm mattress with a tight-fitting sheet is best. No bumper pad, pillows or fluffy blankets in the crib. Place the crib away from blinds, cords, electrical outlets and mobiles.

**Best sleeping position.** Put your baby to sleep on his or her back for the first four months. Never put your baby to sleep on a pillow.

**Sleepwear tips.** A one-piece sleeper is the best choice. Don't use long nightgowns with drawstrings at the bottom because they can wrap around baby's ankle and cause loss of blood flow.

## Cocoon Your Baby

**Update your vaccinations.** Parents, grandparents and caregivers should be vaccinated for Tdap to protect your baby from whooping cough in the first months of life. Pregnant moms should be vaccinated in their third trimester, even if they have previously received Tdap vaccine. All those in close contact with the newborn should receive a flu vaccine since this immunization cannot be given before six months of age.

**Avoid Crowds.** For the first two months, don't take your baby to large public places such as malls and grocery stores.

**Keep all your well-baby doctor appointments.** It's important to have your pediatrician check your baby's developmental milestones.

## Feeding Advice

**Stay awake!** During those middle-of-the-night feedings, it's very easy for new moms to fall asleep while they're nursing. Sleeping in the same bed with your baby is a suffocation risk. Turn on the lights and the TV during feedings. Or wake up your partner to help keep you awake.

**Be careful with bottles.** Heat bottle with a bottle warmer or a pan of warm water. Do not use the microwave as it heats unevenly. Test the formula on inside of your forearm.



**No soft foods before six months.** Research has shown a strong link between obesity and Type 2 diabetes when rice cereal is given before four months.

## Play Time

**Go soft.** Choose baby-safe mirrors, mobiles they can't reach, soft baby books and toys without hard parts.

**Keep an eye on older children.** Don't leave the baby alone with a young child who may hand the baby a toy.

## Bath Time

**Sponge baths first.** Start bathing after the cord falls off using soap for sensitive skin. Once you start bathing in the tub, only fill it with about an inch of water. Never leave a baby unattended in a bathtub.



**Keep water room temperature.** Don't heat it warmer than 950.

## Let's Ride

**Get a new car seat.** Buy a rear-facing infant car seat and learn how to use it before you pick baby up from the Hospital. Used car seats are not recommended. If a car seat has been in an accident, it is no longer effective.

**Get it checked.** Car seats only work if they're installed correctly. Go to a local police or fire station to check installation or visit [www.seatcheck.org](http://www.seatcheck.org) for a child safety seat inspection location near you.

## Be an Advocate for Your Baby

**Educate caregivers.** Inform your family members and caregivers about the current best practices for infant safety.

**Take Infant CPR.** Parents and caregivers should take a CPR course for infant safety. See page 8 for class dates and times.