

# Keeping **B A B Y** Safe

Babies have no understanding of danger. The most common causes of injury to babies under six months of age are: car crashes, falls from furniture, crib injuries, burns, and inhaling or choking on small objects or pieces of food.

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## **To prevent injury, follow these *basic safety tips*:**

- Set the temperature on your water heater's thermostat at 120 degrees Fahrenheit (48.8 degrees centigrade) or lower.
- Install and maintain smoke alarms (outside bedrooms and on every floor) and carbon monoxide detectors in your home.
- Install safety guards on windows.
- Try to use cordless blinds or curtains or tie drapery and blind cords up to prevent strangulation.
- Never leave your baby alone in the house, whether awake or asleep.
- Never leave your baby alone in a bath, on a raised surface, or with pets.
- Never prop your baby's bottle.
- Always use a car seat, even for short journeys.
- Never shake or play rough with baby as it may cause "shaken baby syndrome" and brain damage.
- Avoid drinking or eating anything hot or smoking when holding baby.
- Always test bath water before putting baby in it - make sure water is not too hot.



## **Sun Safety**

Your baby has sensitive skin that can be easily damaged by the sun. He can't tell you that he is too hot or that the sun is too bright and he can't get out of its way. He needs you to protect him from the sun. Dress your baby in long-sleeved tops and pants. Make sure that he always wears a broad brimmed hat. Find a shady spot or make your own shade with an umbrella or stroller canopy.

Do not apply sunscreen to your baby until he is at least six months old. Never leave a child alone in a motor vehicle, even with a window slightly open. On a typical sunny, summer day, the temperature inside a vehicle can reach potentially deadly levels within minutes.

## Smoking

Children who live in a home where at least one parent smokes may:

- have behaviour problems, like hyperactivity;
- develop colds, coughs, bronchitis, pneumonia and asthma, and be hospitalized during their first year of life because of these illnesses;
- develop ear infections;
- have eye defects.

### For moms who breastfeed...

Nicotine and other harmful chemicals pass into breast milk. These chemicals stay in the breast milk for up to five hours after the last cigarette. Breast milk contaminated by tobacco smoke may cause your baby to be fussy and disturb the baby's sleep. You should keep on breastfeeding and consider making your home smoke-free.



### Live Smoke-Free

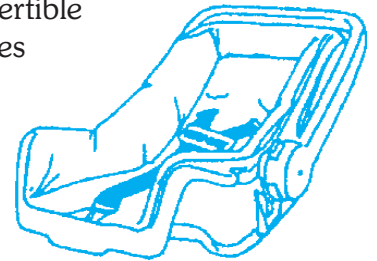
- Make your home and car smoke-free for the health of you and your family.
- Ask friends or family members who smoke to do it outside.
- If you smoke, consider quitting now.



## Car Seats

In Ontario, all children under nine kg (20 pounds) must be in a rear-facing car safety seat no matter whose vehicle they are travelling in.

You can use a rear-facing infant-only car seat for your new baby and move him into a rear facing convertible car seat once he reaches the manufacturer's height and weight limits for the infant-only car seat. Baby should be in a rear-facing car seat until he is about a year old **and** weighs 22 pounds **and** is able to pull himself to a stand.



Newer convertible car seats are able to protect 30 - 35 pound infants rear-facing. Check your car seat manufacturer's instructions for the height and weight limit for your car seat.

The safest position for the car seat is the middle of the back seat. Do not use rear-facing infant car seats in the front seat if the car has air bags. Air bags can kill the baby.

### FREE CAR SEAT SAFETY CLINIC



Look for ads in your local newspaper or flyers around the community advertising the next car seat clinic in your area.

Trained car seat inspectors will check how you have installed your car seat and provide information about car seat safety.

It only takes 15 minutes to ensure your child is safe.



## Cribs

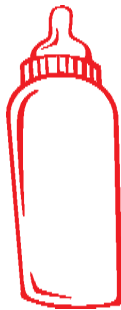
It is your responsibility to make sure your baby sleeps in a safe crib. Cribs made before September 1986 do not meet the latest safety standards. Waterbeds and pillows should not be used. Remove all soft bedding, toys and pillows from the crib when your baby is sleeping, to reduce the risk of suffocation.



## Food Safety

It is safe to keep breast milk or formula in the fridge for up to 48 hours.

If bottle feeding, only put the amount of formula in the bottle that your baby will drink right away. Avoid allowing the formula to remain at room temperature. When travelling, carry baby food or formula in an insulated lunch bag with an ice pack.



Store all opened baby foods in the fridge for up to three days. Do not reheat baby foods more than once. Do not feed your baby right from the jar. Feed from a serving dish to prevent saliva from the spoon going back into the jar. Always hold your baby when feeding to prevent choking.

Avoid using corn syrup or honey during the first year. It may cause food poisoning. Egg whites, peanuts and peanut butter should also be avoided for the first year. Herbal teas are not suitable for babies.


Microwave use is not recommended because of the risk of scalding your baby. If used, stir and test frequently until the food is cool. Avoid heating glass or coloured plastic bottles in the microwave.

Do not put pablum in the bottle. Feed your baby with a small spoon.

## Immunization

Immunization is important. Vaccines protect your baby from disease and infection. Required vaccines are free from your doctor.

Your baby will receive a series of needles starting at two months of age. Vaccines given are recorded on a "Record of Immunization Card." Please keep this record safe.

 Ontario	Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Ministère de la Santé et des Soins de longue
<hr/> <b>Immunization Record</b> <b>Fiche d'immunisation</b> <hr/>	
Name Nom	_____
Date of Birth Date de naissance	_____ (yyyy/mm/dd) (aaaa/mm/jj)
Ontario Health Card Number Numéro de carte Santé de l'Ontario	_____
2373-64 (00/03)	7530-4708

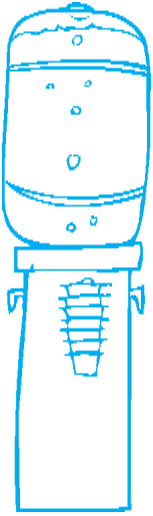
**You will have to show proof of immunization when your child enters day care or school.**

Ontario law states that all children attending school must have up-to-date immunization for measles, mumps, rubella (German Measles), diphtheria, polio and tetanus. Other vaccines requested for day care are pertussis (whooping cough), and Hib (Haemophilus b).



## Water

Water that is safe to drink must still be boiled before it can be used for infants under four months of age. Bring the water to a full rolling boil for one minute, let it cool then store it in a sterilized, tightly closed container in the refrigerator for two or three days, or at room temperature for 24 hours.

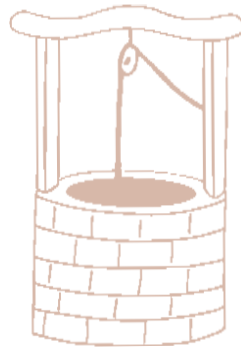


### Town Water and Bottled Water

Town water supplies are checked for more than 100 different things, including nitrates, fluoride and sodium. Town water and water that you buy in bottles/containers (except for carbonated, mineral and distilled water) are safe to use for babies. Use town water only from the cold water tap and remember that even though this water is safe, it must still be boiled for infants under four months of age.

### Well Water

Well water must be tested for bacteria to make sure that it is safe to drink. If you plan on using your well water for an infant under six months of age it must also be tested for nitrates. Even safe well water needs to be boiled when using it for infants under four months of age, but boiling will not remove the nitrates.



### Bacteria

Well water should be routinely tested for bacteria that can make you sick. Testing for bacteria is free and should be done at least two to four times per year. The Health Unit has bottles for testing your water and can answer questions about your well.

### Nitrates

Well water must be tested for nitrates to make sure that it is safe to use for infants under six months of age. High levels of nitrates may be a health risk to infants and cause problems with their development. If the nitrate levels in your well are too high you will have to use another source of water for your baby. Well water is not routinely tested for nitrates but special sample bottles for testing are available for people with infants. Boiling does not remove the nitrates. If the well water has tested safe for nitrates it still needs to be boiled when using it for infants under four months of age. Nitrates found in water are not a concern for pregnant or nursing mothers.

### Spring Water

Although water from roadside springs is usually cold and clear, it may not be free from harmful bacteria. Untreated spring water, the same as other untreated sources of water such as lakes and streams, is not safe to drink. The Health Unit does not test spring water and does not recommend using it. If you use spring water for adults, it must be brought to a rolling boil for one minute.



Spring water should not be used for infants as it is not tested and there may be nitrates in it.



For further information on any of these topics please contact your local Health Unit office.

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