

Keeping Baby 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.

To prevent injury, follow these basic safety tips:

- Set the temperature on your water heater's thermostat at 120° F (48.8° C) 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.
- Always test bath water before putting baby in it - make sure water is not too hot.
- 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.



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 kilograms (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 to 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.

Certified children's restraint systems technicians will check how you have installed your car seat and provide information about car seat safety.



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. Throw away formula that baby does not drink within one hour. When travelling, carry baby food or formula in an insulated lunch bag with an ice pack. Formula fed baby should be held during feeding. Do not use propped bottle.



Do not put pablum in the bottle as it will make baby choke. Feed your baby with a small spoon. 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. Throw away food that remains in baby's dish within one hour.

Avoid using corn syrup or honey during the first year. It may cause food poisoning. Egg whites should also be avoided for the first year. For babies with strong family history, avoid peanuts and peanut butter until two to three years. 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 feed child when he is lying down, walking, running or distracted from eating. Always stay with your baby when he is feeding himself.

Immunization

As a parent, it is your responsibility to protect your child. Vaccination is a safe and free way to help protect your baby from harmful bacteria and viruses.

Vaccines strengthen your child's immune system against specific diseases. Doctors have found that infants can respond to many vaccines given at one time. It is important that you keep all doctors' appointments so your child can be immunized at the proper ages.

Immunization Record Fiche d'immunisation
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


After your child's first immunization, you will be given an immunization card. Please have the doctor record all vaccinations on this card. Store this record somewhere safe in case you need to show what vaccinations your child has received.

By two years of age, your child will have received quite a few vaccinations. At that time, you may wish to take the immunization record to your local health unit office so the information can be entered into their immunization computer. If you ever lose the card, change doctors or move, you will always be able to get a copy of your child's immunization record from the health unit.

You will need to show the immunization record when your child enters daycare or school. You may also be asked for the card again as your child grows and requires more vaccinations. Should there be an outbreak of an infectious disease in the area, you may be asked for proof of your child's immunization. This will help health authorities decide whether or not your child is in danger of infection.



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 can be done through private laboratories.

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.



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