



Baby Safety Basics

A guide to keeping your baby safe during the first year of life.

The leading causes of unintentional injury-related death for infants are suffocation, car crashes, drowning, fire or burn injury, falls, and poisoning.

Injuries are preventable and we can show you how. Safe Kids Worldwide and Cribs for Kids have created this guide to give you the safety essentials you need to know when caring for your baby.





Crib Safety

More babies die each year in incidents involving cribs, than from any other nursery product. Your baby spends a lot of time unsupervised in the crib, so learn to make it a safer place.

BUYING A SAFE CRIB

All new cribs on the market today meet the safety standards of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association (JPMA).

Before getting a used crib, check to see if it has been recalled at www.recalls.gov. Also, look for the following suffocation and strangulation hazards:

- Sharp or jagged edges
- Missing, broken or loose parts
- Loose hardware
- Cut out designs in the headboard or footboard
- Crib slats more than 2 3/8 inches apart (width of a soda can)
- Corner post extension over 1/16 of an inch high
- Gaps larger than 2 fingers width between the sides of the crib and the mattress
- Drop side latches that could be easily released by your baby

When using any crib:

- Follow the directions for assembly.
- Don't try to fix any part of it with tape, wire, a rope, or by putting a broken side up against the wall.

Remember that the Cribs for Kids Graco Pack n' Play was made for babies who are less than 35 inches tall and weigh less than 30 lbs.



Back to Sleep

Soft bedding can suffocate a baby, blocking the baby's airway during sleep. Babies can suffocate when their faces become wedged against or buried in a mattress, pillow or other soft object. This can also happen when someone in the same bed rolls over onto them.

Room-sharing is a safer option than having your baby sleep in bed with you. Place your baby's crib, play yard or bassinet in your room during the first 6 months for more convenient feeding and close contact. Remember to always return your baby to his or her own crib when you're ready to go back to sleep.



DOS AND DON'TS OF SAFE SLEEP

DO:

- Lay your baby on his or her **back to sleep** to reduce the risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.)
- Use a safe crib with a **firm, tight-fitting mattress** covered **with a crib sheet** and **nothing else in it.**
- To keep your baby warm, use a sleep sack (wearable blanket).

DON'T:

Do not put your baby to sleep on beds, sofas, recliners, chairs, soft surfaces, bouncy chairs, baby swings, or car seats.

- Do not use pillows, loose sheets or blankets, stuffed toys, crib bumpers, sleep positioners, and other soft bedding products.





Bath Time

Get everything you'll need beforehand to make this time safer and easier for both of you.

Have a safe water temperature. Your baby's skin can burn faster than an adult's because it's thinner and more sensitive.

- Set the temperature of your **water heater at 120 degrees Fahrenheit.**
- **Put anti-scald devices on faucets.** These devices turn off the water if the temperature is too hot.
- Seat your baby facing **away from the faucet** so he or she won't try to turn it on.
- **Test the bathwater** with your wrist or elbow before bathing your baby.

Never leave your baby alone. Babies can drown in as little as 1 inch of water. They usually drown in bathtubs, 5-gallon buckets and toilets. The main problem is lack of supervision – usually for a short period of time.

- **Don't leave your baby unattended** in the tub or near sinks, buckets and containers filled with water. Babies can slip out of bath seats, fall out of baby tubs or tip forward or sideways into the water and drown in seconds!



- Always **keep one hand on your baby.** This also applies to older babies who can sit up by themselves.
- Don't let older siblings bathe your baby.

Feeding Your Baby

Don't hold your baby while cooking or carrying hot foods and liquids. Most scald burns in young children, especially in ages 6 months to 2 years, are from hot foods and liquids spilled in the kitchen or wherever food is prepared and served.



- **Heat bottles with warm water,** instead of in the microwave. Drinks heated in a microwave may be much hotter than their containers. Test them before feeding your baby.
- **When using a high chair,** make sure your baby is sitting down and is strapped in.
- Offer cooked and softer foods when it's age-appropriate. Make sure that everything is cut into tiny pieces, mashed or pureed.
- Learn **infant CPR** and the **Heimlich maneuver** for choking.





Play Time Basics

Babies explore with their hands, mouths and eyes, and enjoy toys they can touch or squeeze. Also, make sure you're providing your baby **supervised tummy time** on a daily basis while your baby is awake. This strengthens the neck and upper body muscles in case he or she rolls over during sleep.

RECOMMENDED TOYS:

- Floor activity centers
- Activity quilts
- Squeaky toys
- Soft dolls or stuffed animals without button noses and eyes



TOYS TO AVOID:

- Recalled toys
- Latex balloons
- Small, rounded or oval objects (like balls and marbles)
- Hard toys attached to car seat handles
- Toys with strings or cords
- Toys with lead or magnets

TIPS:

- Use **stationary activity centers**, instead of baby walkers. This keeps your baby in a safe location.
- Always **strap your baby** when using swings or bouncy chairs.
- **Before shopping for toys**, consider your baby's age, interest and skill level.
- **Read age and safety labels.** Toys that are labeled for children 3 years and older should be kept away from children under age 3.
- **Check old and new toys regularly for damage** that may cause small pieces to break off.

Young children have small airways. Take an empty toilet paper roll and put the small object in it. If it fits completely into the roll, don't let children under 3 play with it. The reason you use a toilet paper roll is because it's close in size to a young child's fully expanded throat.





Make Your Home Safer

Look at the world through your baby's eyes to see what looks interesting and what can be reached. Get down on your hands and knees and check for small things your baby can choke on like coins and small toy parts.

Supervise your baby at all times. Don't rely on older siblings to take care of your baby. Even older children don't recognize dangers at times and may not be able to provide the best protection for your baby.



SAFETY BASICS:

- Have **working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors** inside all bedrooms, outside all sleeping areas and on every level of your home. Test alarms monthly and change batteries once a year.
- **Install stair gates** at the top and bottom of stairs. Stair gates at the top must be attached to the wall with hardware.
- **Secure furniture to the wall** to avoid tip overs.
- Use **cordless window coverings**.
- Install **window guards** on all windows above the first floor.
- Keep these **out of reach**: electrical cords, frayed or damaged cords, uncovered outlets, plastic bags, matches, lighters, candles, fireplaces, space heaters, irons, guns, and small objects (like jewelry, buttons, pins, paper clips, nails, stones, etc.)
- Keep a **first aid kit** on hand.
- Place **emergency numbers** and the poison control hotline, 1-800-222-1222, by every phone and in your cell phones.

PREVENT POISONINGS:

Babies have a slow digestion, so dangerous things in small amounts can be poisonous.

- **Lock up** medicines, vitamins, cleaning products, pet food, alcohol, poisonous plants, and chemicals (like paint, gasoline, etc.) **out of your baby's reach**.
- **Read labels and follow directions** when giving medicine to your baby.
- Use **child-resistant caps**.

PREVENT FALLS:

Falls from furniture (cribs, changing tables, highchairs, and strollers) are the most common type of falls in babies 3-11 months old.

- **Don't leave your baby unattended.**
- **Keep one hand on your baby** while changing diapers.
- When your baby is in a carrier, **place it on the floor** and not on top of a table, washer, dryer or other piece of furniture.





Safety on the Way

The best car seat is the one that's right for your baby's size and age and can be properly installed.

- **Use a rear-facing car seat in a back seat of your car until your baby is at least age 1 and 20 lbs.** Then, switch to a rear-facing convertible seat with higher weight and height limits.
- Have your **car seat checked** by a currently certified child passenger safety technician to make sure it's properly installed.
- **Never leave your baby alone** in a car, even for a minute.
- Make sure the **harness straps** that keep your baby properly positioned and secured in the car seat **fit snugly**. Loose harness straps don't provide maximum protection.
- All car seats have an **expiration date**. Generally, it's 6 years, but contact the manufacturer of the seat to find out what the expiration date is.
- Never buy a used car seat if you don't know its **full history** and never use a car seat that has **been in a crash**.
- **Don't use any products in the car seat that didn't come from the manufacturer.** Car seat fabrics meet strict fire safety codes. Add-on toys can injure your child in a crash.

REMEMBER:

Car seats are made for travel. Don't leave your baby for hours on end in the car seat outside of the car.

DID YOU KNOW?

Securing babies in **rear-facing seats** has proven **to be the safest option** to support their head, neck and spinal cord to prevent injuries. Toddlers under age 2 are safer riding rear-facing, if the seat allows it.

NEED HELP?

Safe Kids coalitions provide free instruction on how to install your car seat correctly by currently certified child passenger safety technicians. To contact **your local Safe Kids coalition**, visit www.usa.safekids.org or call (202) 662-0600.



Baby Product Safety

- Buy or use products that meet the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association (JPMA) **safety standards**, if ones exist. Keep in mind that not all children's products have standards regulating their design and safety performance. Be an informed consumer by examining the product carefully.
- Check **www.recalls.gov** to see if a product, especially if it was used before, has been recalled.
- Remove all recalled products from your home immediately.
- Sign up to receive e-mail recall notifications at **www.cpsc.gov**. When you buy a new product like a car seat, mail in the registration card to receive important recall information.
- Follow all **manufacturer's instructions** when setting up, installing and using a product.

**For more information
visit www.safekids.org
or call (202) 662-0600**

