

Get ready for baby

Preventive health tips for your child's first days

Bringing your baby home from the hospital can be a joyous occasion. It's a time you want to be fully prepared for — so follow these guidelines for baby safety. After all, for these precious first years, your child's well-being is all up to you.



Make sure you have a great pediatrician

You'll need to find a pediatrician before your baby is born. Start by asking friends and family. Empire can also give you a list of providers who are in your network, along with details on their credentials. Then, conduct interviews of your top picks. After all, the role of your child's pediatrician is a very important job.

In the car: Finding — and using — the right car seat

Make sure your seat is safe and properly installed. Here are some tips:

- If you're using a car seat from an older child, be sure it's still considered safe. Older car seats could fall short of current safety standards, or could have been recalled due to faulty design. Also, as plastic gets older it gets more brittle, which can be risky in a crash, so now, many seats contain an expiration date. If your used seat has no expiration date, replace it after 10 years.¹
- Don't use a used car seat unless you know its history.
- Don't use a car seat that has been in a car accident.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all infants and toddlers ride in a rear-facing car seat until they are at least two years of age or preferably until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their car seat's manufacturer.²

Carefully follow the installation instructions that have come with your car seat, and if you have questions or need help, contact a certified car seat inspector. Go to seatcheck.org for a list of free inspection sites.

In the home: Changing table safety

When it comes to diapers, changing tables can make things easier. But falls from a surface at that height can be dangerous for a baby. Be sure to:

- Choose a table with a 2-inch guardrail around all four sides.
- Make sure the top of the table is concave, so the middle is slightly lower than the sides.
- Buckle the safety strap, but still keep a hand on your baby.
- Keep diapers nearby, but out of baby's reach. Inhaled baby powder can be harmful to your baby's lungs, and if a child tears off a piece of disposable diaper plastic, it could be a choking hazard.

In the crib: Guidelines for safe sleeping

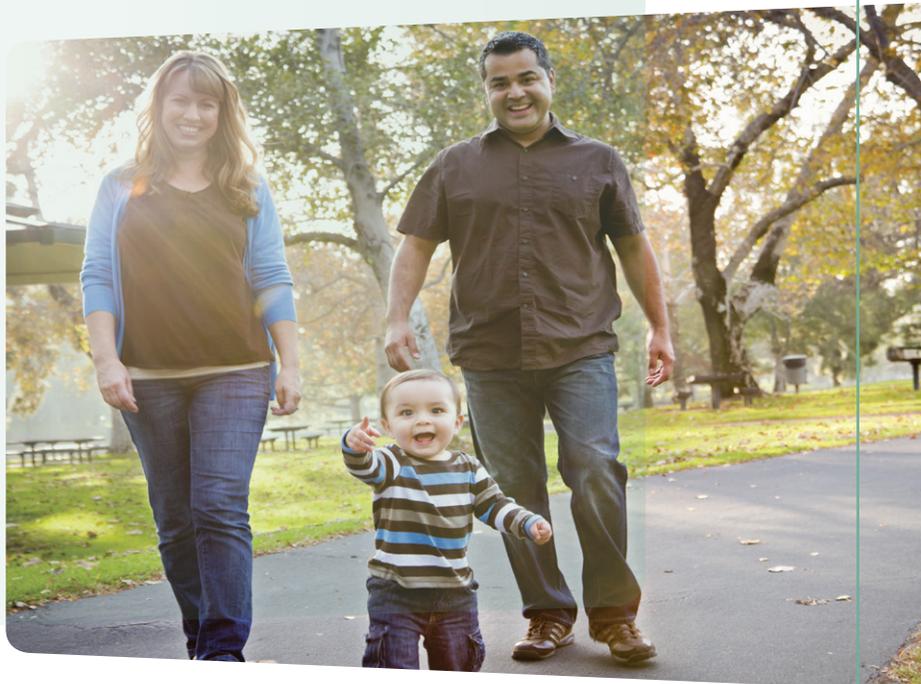
Your newborn will sleep a lot at first — typically 16 to 17 hours a day. That makes crib safety a critical part of your preventive care plan. Always follow these standards:

- Place your baby on a firm mattress, covered by a fitted sheet that meets current safety standards. For more about crib safety standards, visit the Consumer Product Safety Commission's website at cpsc.gov.
- Don't place babies to sleep on adult beds, chairs, sofas, waterbeds, pillows or cushions.
- Toys and soft bedding, including fluffy blankets, comforters, pillows, stuffed animals, bumper pads and wedges, should not be placed in the crib with the baby. Loose bedding, such as sheets and blankets, should not be used, as these items can impair the infant's ability to breathe if they are close to his or her face.
- Place your baby to sleep on his or her back to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Side sleeping is not as safe as back sleeping and is not advised. Babies sleep comfortably on their backs, and no special equipment or extra money is needed.³

In the community: Taking baby outside

Natural light and fresh air are good for baby and mom. So it's not only safe to take your newborn outside in his or her first days — it's also encouraged. Just remember these pointers:

- Don't overdress or underdress your baby when you leave the house. Your baby should wear as many layers as you yourself are comfortable wearing.
- Keep your baby out of direct sunlight. Newborns' delicate skin can burn easily, so keep them shaded with clothing or an umbrella.
- Avoid places where you know there are people who are ill, or where they might be in contact with polluted air or smoke.



Sources:

1 www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2529436/, Pediatric Child Health, 2008 April

2 www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/on-the-go/Pages/Car-Safety-Seats-Information-for-Families.aspx, The American Academy of Pediatrics, accessed 1/4/2016

3 www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/sleep/Pages/A-Parents-Guide-to-Safe-Sleep.aspx, The American Academy of Pediatrics, accessed 1/4/2016