Caring for Your Newborn
# Emergency Information

Tear or cut this page out of the book if you want to hang it by your phone or on the refrigerator.

**In case of emergency dial 911 or your local ambulance**

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In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room right away. This is general information and is not specific medical advice for your child. Always consult your child’s doctor or other healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns about the care or health of your child.
Use this chart to help keep track of your baby’s:
- Well baby visits
- Illnesses
- Injuries
- Immunizations

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Caring for Your Newborn

Congratulations on your new baby! Your baby will bring great joy and excitement to your life. Having a baby also raises many questions for most parents. This booklet can help answer some basic questions about caring for him. For easier reading, we will use the words “he or him” when we talk about your baby - even if your baby is a girl.

Babies need a lot of love and care. **Helping your baby feel loved and secure is the most important thing you can do.** You do this when you:

- Hold, rock, snuggle and hug your baby
- Talk or sing to him in a quiet, gentle voice
- Respond to him when he cries
- Feed and change him
- Keep him clean and warm
- Keep him safe
- Seek medical care when he is sick

**If you ever have an urgent concern or emergency with your baby, call 911 right away.**

For routine matters, ask your baby’s doctor when you have any questions or concerns about your baby.
Your Baby

You may have questions about what is normal and what is not normal for your baby. Each baby is different. Some things that new babies do seem strange, but are very normal. New parents often worry because they don’t know what is normal. Call your baby’s doctor if you are worried about your baby.

These things can be normal for new babies:
- Shaking or trembling of the:
  - Chin or lower lip
  - Arms and legs while crying
  - Hands and feet
- Irregular breathing
  - Breathing may look like a seesaw of the chest and tummy between breaths
- Stuffy nose with snorty, noisy breathing
- Hiccoughs, sneezing, burping, yawning and gurgling
- Spitting up once in awhile
- Startle reflex
  - This is when your baby stiffens or jumps when he hears a sound
- Straining, grunting or turning red with a bowel movement (BM)
- Passing gas
- Dry, peeling skin, especially on the hands and feet
- Some rashes
- Eyes crossing
  - Babies eyes cannot focus yet, but they can clearly see things 8 - 10 inches away from their face

Holding

HOW MUCH SHOULD I HOLD MY BABY?
Newborn babies need to feel safe and loved. Hold your baby a lot. Hold your baby for comfort, for feeding and for play. Look into your baby’s face and talk to him. Don’t worry that you are going to spoil your baby.
HOW SHOULD I HOLD MY BABY?
There are different ways to hold your baby.
• You may hold your baby over your shoulder, in your arms or on your lap.
• When you hold your baby, make sure to support his head. Newborn babies don’t have strong enough muscles to support their head by themselves.
• Support your baby’s body well so that he does not fall.
• Do not allow children to hold a baby without an adult watching them. Make sure the child sits down on a chair or couch with an adult close by.

CAN OTHER PEOPLE HOLD MY BABY?
Do not allow your newborn baby to be passed around to a lot of people. Babies do not have strong immune systems and they can get sick easily. Have your family members wash their hands with soap and water before holding the baby. Anyone who is sick should not hold your baby.

Feeding
WHAT SHOULD I FEED MY BABY?
Breastfeeding is recommended for babies. If you choose to bottle feed, there are many store bought formulas to choose from. Talk with your doctor about which formula is best for your baby.

Give your baby only breastmilk or formula until the doctor tells you to begin feeding him cereal and other foods. He does not need water or juice or until then.
To help prevent problems with your baby’s new teeth, even before they come in:
• Never prop a bottle. This can lead to tooth decay. It can also cause ear infections.
• Wipe your baby’s gums with a clean, wet cloth after each feeding.

**BREASTFEEDING**
• Fresh breastmilk (that has never been refrigerated or frozen) is good at room temperature for 5 hours. It is good in the refrigerator for 5 days.
• Breastfed babies need Vitamin D drops by 2 months of age.
  – Ask your baby’s doctor about how many Vitamin D drops to give.
  – Also ask the doctor if your baby needs any other supplements such as iron.

**FORMULA**
• Throw away any room temperature formula after 2 hours.
• Formula made from powder can be stored in the refrigerator for 24 hours.
• Formula made from liquid concentrate can be stored in the refrigerator for 48 hours.
• Do not clean your baby’s pacifier or bottle nipple by putting it in your mouth. Your saliva may contain germs that can cause problems and tooth decay for your baby.

**HOW SHOULD I FEED MY BABY?**
**ALWAYS** hold your baby when you feed him. Never prop the bottle or leave him alone when he is eating.
• This could cause your baby to choke
• It can increase the risk of ear infections
• It can also cause tooth decay

Holding your baby while you feed him is also important for bonding. Feeding time is an important time for your baby to feel love from you.
• Feeding your baby gives him both nutrition and security.
• Your baby needs to be held and feel loved.
• Try to feel calm and relaxed when you feed your baby.

WHEN SHOULD I START MY BABY ON FOOD?
Do not give your new baby any solid food – new babies are not ready for food yet.
• Solid foods are anything other than breastmilk or formula. This includes such things as cereal, baby food, applesauce, mashed potatoes and yogurt.
• Giving your baby food might make him choke or cause him to develop allergies.
• Most times, babies start on food around 6 months of age.
• Never give your baby honey. Honey sometimes contains germs that can harm babies less than 1 year old.
• Talk with your doctor to help decide when to start your baby on food.

HOW MUCH SHOULD MY BABY EAT?
Most babies know when they are hungry and know when they are full. Let your baby tell you when he is ready to eat. Feed your baby 8-12 times a day on-demand. This means that anytime your baby seems hungry – feed him.
• Babies may eat different amounts at different feedings. This is OK. Sometimes he might be hungrier than other times.
• Make sure your baby has at least 6-8 wet diapers during a 24 hour period.
• Sometimes, your baby may only need to suck and not eat. You can let him suck on a pacifier or on his hands.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I BURP MY BABY?
Burping your baby can help decrease spitting up. Burping releases gas trapped in your baby’s stomach.
• Burp your baby halfway through the feeding. Then burp him after the feeding is finished.
• You may sit your baby on your lap with one of your hands supporting his chin and head. Gently pat your baby’s back with the other hand.
• Or you may put your baby over your shoulder and support him with one hand. Gently pat him on the back with the other.
• Always have a towel handy when you burp your baby. Your baby might spit-up a little when you burp him. This is normal.
Bathing and Skin Care

HOW SHOULD I BATHE MY BABY?
Give your baby a sponge bath for the first week or two until his belly button and/or circumcision are healed.

Once your baby’s belly button and circumcision have healed, give him a bath in a baby bath tub or sink. Be careful, wet babies are slippery.

Do not EVER leave your baby alone in bath water – not even for a second. ALWAYS be with your baby while he is in the water.

• Clean the tub or sink well before putting your baby in it.
• Have a clean washcloth and towel, soap, shampoo and any other supplies you need with you before you get started.
• Use warm bath water. The water should not be so cool that your baby will get cold and not so hot that he will get burned.
• Wipe off his face and head with a damp washcloth and plain water.
• Use a washcloth and mild soap to wash all over your baby’s body.
• Rinse your baby off well to remove any soap. Dry him well when you get done so he does not get cold.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD I BATHE MY BABY?
A newborn baby does not need to have a bath everyday. Too much bathing can dry the skin. NEVER leave your baby alone in bath water, not even for a minute.
• You can give your baby a full bath every 2-3 days after the belly button and/or circumcision is healed.
• Wipe off your baby’s hands with a damp washcloth and mild soap several times a day to keep his hands clean. Your baby puts his hands in his mouth often.
• Wipe your baby’s face and neck each day with plain water and a soft washcloth. Also wipe any milk from his face and neck as needed.
• Clean around the diaper area each time you change a diaper. You may use a cloth with soap and warm water or disposable baby-wipes.

Skin Care

Your baby should not need any powders, lotions or oils on his skin. Talk with your doctor before you use of any of these products. When you take your baby outside, protect his skin from wind and sun.
• Cover his head and skin or stay in the shade with him.
• Do not use sunscreen or insect repellant until your baby is at least 6 months old.

Nail Care

SHOULD I TRIM MY BABY’S FINGERNAILS?
Babies sometimes need their fingernails trimmed so that they don’t scratch themselves.
• Be very careful and only trim off the rough edges on the nails. Baby’s nails are soft and if you trim them too closely they might bleed.
• Your doctor or nurse can show you how to trim your baby’s nails if you have questions.
• If your baby is scratching himself, you can also buy hand protectors to go over his hands.
Clothing

HOW SHOULD I DRESS MY BABY?
Dress your newborn in the same way that you would be comfortable plus one extra layer. Clothes should not be too tight or too loose.
• If you would be comfortable in a long sleeved T-shirt, then your baby will be comfortable in a long sleeved T-shirt and a light sweater or blanket.
• Don’t wrap your baby in lots of layers if it isn’t cold. But don’t dress your baby in just a T-shirt if you need a sweatshirt to stay warm.
• Your baby does not need to wear shoes. Socks or booties can keep his feet warm
• Do not overdress your baby. This can cause your baby to be too warm. Babies who are too warm have more of a chance for crib death (also called SIDS or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) when they sleep.

Sleeping

WHERE SHOULD MY BABY SLEEP?
Have your baby sleep in his own crib without any pillows or heavy blankets in the crib with him.
• If you like, bring the crib or bassinet into your bedroom so you can have your baby close to you.
• Your baby should NOT sleep in the bed with you or other children.
  – He could suffocate from the pillows or blankets.
  – He could also be injured from someone rolling on him.
• Your baby should also NOT sleep on a couch or chair.
  – He could suffocate from sliding between the pillows.
  – He could also be injured from rolling onto the floor.

It is OK for your baby to fuss a little before he falls asleep. If your baby is fussy before sleeping, talk to him and pat him. You don’t need to pick him up every time. It is good for your baby to learn to soothe himself to sleep.
WHAT POSITION SHOULD MY BABY SLEEP IN?

 ALWAYS lay your baby on his back to sleep. This is the safest position for him to sleep unless your doctor tells you something different. Laying him on his back helps to prevent crib death, also called Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Use a firm mattress without anything else in the crib such as:
• Pillows or blankets
• Toys or stuffed animals
• Crib bumpers

HOW MUCH SHOULD MY BABY SLEEP?
Newborn babies sleep a lot. They can sleep between 17 and 20 hours a day. Your baby:
• Should wake up every 2 to 4 hours to eat and be changed
• Needs to eat 8 to 12 times a day
• Needs to have 6 to 8 wet diapers a day

Your baby should be fully awake when you feed him. If you think your baby is sleeping so much that he isn’t eating enough, or if you have a hard time waking your baby up for feedings, talk to your doctor.

Crying

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY BABY IS CRYING?
Crying is normal for babies. Babies usually cry when they are hungry, wet, bored, uncomfortable or when they need to be held.

When your baby cries, check to see if he:
• Is hungry, wet or soiled
• Is comfortable and that he isn’t too hot or too cold
• Needs to be burped

Your baby may just need to be held and comforted. Babies need a lot of love, cuddling and holding. See if holding or rocking your baby settles him down. Do not be afraid of spoiling your baby by holding him. New babies cannot be spoiled.
If your baby is crying for over an hour and none of these things seem to comfort him, call your doctor. Your baby may need to come into the office for a visit.

If your baby is crying a lot and you feel like you cannot cope with the crying anymore, get help. *Never, ever shake your baby.*

**Wet Diapers and Bowel Movements**

Babies should have 6-8 wet diapers a day. This shows that your baby is getting enough to drink. Call your baby’s doctor if you notice a decrease in wet diapers.

**HOW OFTEN SHOULD MY BABY HAVE A BOWEL MOVEMENT?**

How often a baby has a bowel movement is different for each baby.

- Some babies have several bowel movements a day.
- Older babies might have one bowel movement every other day or every couple of days. As long as your baby’s bowel movements are soft, you don’t need to worry.

**WHAT SHOULD MY BABY’S BOWEL MOVEMENTS LOOK LIKE?**

Bowel movements look different for each baby.

- Bowel movements should be soft. Sometimes they might even be seedy or liquid.
- It is normal for a baby’s bowel movements to be brown, yellow or green.
- It is normal for some baby’s bowel movements to smell bad.
- Let your doctor know if your baby’s bowel movements are:
  - Hard
  - Black, red, pink or white in color
  - Blood tinged or if you see any blood in them.
Outings

Avoid taking your baby into crowds of people for the first few months. This includes such things as family parties, trips to the mall or going to an amusement park. Newborn babies have weak immune systems and can catch germs easily. Your baby can go outside for outings as long as the weather is nice.
- Be sure to protect your baby from wind and sun.
- Use a hat and lightweight clothes to protect your baby from the sun. Or, stay in the shade when possible.
- Do not use sunscreen or insect repellant until your baby is at least 6 months old.

Tummy Time

Place your baby on his back to sleep. When your baby is awake, make sure that he spends some time on his tummy. Always stay with your baby when he is on his tummy. This helps to keep him safe and also gives you time together to cuddle or play. Tummy time helps to:
- Build strong muscles in your baby's neck, shoulders and arms. This helps when he begins to roll, crawl and sit.
- Prevent a flat spot on the back of his head.

Use these ideas for tummy time for your new baby. As you do them, gently turn his head from side to side:
- Carry your baby over your shoulder and gently support his head. This gives him tummy time while snuggling against you at the same time.
- Carry your baby using a football hold. Instead of placing him in your arms with his tummy and face up, place his tummy and face down. Support his chest and body with your arm.
- Lie on your back and place your baby on your chest facing you. As he grows, he can lift his head and look at you.
- Lay your baby on your lap or over your knees with his tummy and face down.
- Change your baby's position during the day. Do not leave your baby sitting in a baby carrier or bouncer seat for a long time.

ONCE YOUR BABY IS A FEW MONTHS OLD:
- Play with him on the floor. Place toys on both sides of him. Help him lift his head to see and reach for the toys.
- Place him on the floor and put a small blanket or towel under his chest. Help him use his arms to lift his head off the floor.
- Continue to lay your baby on your lap or over your knees with his tummy and face down.
**Common Concerns with Babies**

**Belly Button (Umbilicus)**

Your baby will have a dried cord on his belly button for about 2 weeks after being born. The dried cord will dry up and fall off on its own. Leave the area alone and let it heal by itself.

- Only give sponge baths until the dried cord falls off.
- Your baby’s doctor will tell you if you should use alcohol to clean the dried cord.
- Never pull off any part of the dried cord. Just let it fall off by itself when it is ready to.
- You may see some dried blood around the belly button. This is normal.
- Let your doctor know if you see any active bleeding, oozing or swelling or notice a bad smell coming from the belly button.

**Small Bumps on Your Baby’s Head (Cephalohematomas)**

Cephalohematomas are small, soft bumps on either side of a new baby's head. The bumps are made up of blood that collects under the scalp after a baby travels through the narrow birth canal during delivery. The bumps usually go away on their own in about 6 weeks.

**Circumcision**

If your baby had a circumcision right after birth, you will need to check it each time you do a diaper change. Circumcisions are usually red and will take a week or more to heal.

- Apply petroleum jelly, such as Vaseline® on your baby’s penis each time you do a diaper change.
  - This keeps the skin from sticking to the diaper
  - Do this for 5-7 days or until the redness is gone
- Only give sponge baths until the circumcision is healed
- Let your doctor know if the area bleeds, has any drainage or a bad smell.

**Soft Spots on Your Baby’s Head (Fontanels)**

All babies have 2 soft spots on the top of their head. These spots are where the bones of the skull have not grown together all the way yet. This is normal.
• Be careful with these spots because the hard skull bones do not protect this part of the brain yet.
• The skull bones will close and the soft spots will disappear when your baby is about 12 - 18 months old.

Jaundice

Jaundice means that the skin and eyes have a yellow color. It is caused by extra bilirubin in the blood after birth. This is a common problem in about half of all newborns.
• Let your doctor know if you think your baby looks yellow or has any skin color changes. Your baby may need a blood test to make sure that the bilirubin level is not too high.
• Your doctor will let you know if your baby needs any treatment for the jaundice.

Colic

WHAT IF MY BABY HAS COLIC?
If your baby cries for long periods at a time and you cannot find a reason for his crying, talk to your doctor. If your doctor says that your baby may have colic:
• Colic is when a healthy baby cries for more than 3 hours a day.
• No one knows why some babies have colic.
• It goes away on its own between 3 and 6 months of age.
• Medicines do not usually help.

Try and comfort your baby. Take a break from a crying baby when you need to. Most babies outgrow colic in a few months.

Some tips to help if your baby has colic:
• Feed your baby less and feed him more often. Do not give him too much at one time.
• Feed your baby slowly. Burp him often.
• Allow your baby to suck on a pacifier or on his fingers or fist.
• If your baby is taking formula, talk with your baby’s doctor about a change.
• Try moving with your baby – this sometimes helps.
  – Walk with him upright over your shoulder.
  – Carry him against your stomach in a baby pouch.
  – Try rocking, swinging or pushing him in a stroller.
  – Put him in a car seat and go for a ride in the car.
• Lay your baby across your lap and gently rub his back.
• Place him in warm water in a baby tub or sink. Be sure to NOT leave him alone.
• Gently rub his stomach.

Colic can upset everyone in the family. Do not get angry and shake or hit your baby if he is crying a lot. He cannot control his crying.

Some tips to help you when your baby has colic:
• Take a break once in awhile. Place your baby in his crib and walk away for a few minutes. Watch TV or listen to music.
• Get enough rest.
• Ask a friend to stay with your baby for awhile. Go for a walk or play with your other children for awhile.

If your baby is crying a lot and you feel like you cannot cope with the crying anymore, get help. **Never, ever shake your baby.**

### Diaper Rash

If your baby has a lot of redness or a rash around his bottom, inner thighs or genitals (private parts), he may have a diaper rash. If he does:
• Clean his skin with a mild soap like Dove® and warm water. Do not use baby wipes.
• Use a store bought diaper rash cream on his skin if needed. Zinc oxide creams, like Desitin® usually work well. Spread it over all the reddened areas each time you change his diaper.

If your baby is getting a lot of diaper rashes, you may need to change his diaper more often. Tell your doctor know if your baby has a lot of diaper rashes or if his skin has any open sores.

### Skin Problems

Many newborns have rashes or other skin problems. Some normal skin conditions include dry skin, birth marks, peeling skin, acne and a bumpy looking rash.

*If your baby has blisters or has a new rash along with a fever or trouble breathing, let your doctor know right away.*
A rash on the chin or cheeks that comes and goes is normal.
• It can be from contact with formula or from spitting up.
• Keep your baby’s face and neck clean and dry. Use a cool washcloth for rash relief.

Call your baby’s doctor if your baby has any:
• Rash that is not getting better as expected
• Blisters (small, fluid filled bumps) that occur during the first month of life
• Other signs of illness such as a fever, trouble breathing or excess sleepiness

WHAT IF MY BABY HAS ACNE?
Newborn acne is common. You might notice small red bumps on the cheeks, chin or forehead that looks like the acne that teenagers have. This is normal and will disappear on its own after the first few weeks of life.
• No treatment is needed
• Creams, oils or lotions might make the acne worse
• Never squeeze acne bumps on your baby’s skin

WHAT IF MY BABY HAS DRY SKIN?
Dry, flaky skin is normal for newborns while they adjust to life outside the womb. It is more common on the hands and feet.
• This is normal and should go away when your baby is about 4 weeks old.
• Lotions, creams and oils are not needed.

WHAT IF MY BABY HAS BIRTH MARKS?
Your baby might have one or more birthmarks. This is normal. Be sure to tell your doctor if the birthmark changes in color, grows larger or bleeds. Your doctor will tell you if your baby needs any treatment.
• Pink birthmarks (called stork bites) are common on the nose, eyelids or back of the neck. These are normal and will usually clear up without treatment.
• Red birthmarks that are raised may appear around 3 weeks of age. They become larger and then usually fade away by 6 to 8 years of age. They usually do not need any treatment.
• Some birthmarks can be brown like freckles or a mole.

WHAT IF MY BABY HAS CRADLE CAP?
Cradle cap is a scalp condition often seen in infants. It can occur from a few weeks to a few months of age. The cause is not known. It should be treated to avoid spreading and to prevent a possible infection.
You might notice
• Redness on the scalp
• Greasy, white or yellow scales over the scalp

Your doctor will talk to you about what to do for your baby. Some of the treatments might include:
• Brushing your baby’s scalp lightly with a soft brush once a day
• Using a baby shampoo as advised by your baby’s doctor

If your baby does have cradle cap, call your baby’s doctor if there is:
• Swelling, redness or pain
• Drainage from the scalp
• A bad smell from the area
• Fever (temperature over 100.3°F or 38˚C)

Stuffy Nose

WHAT IF MY BABY HAS A STUFFY NOSE?
Newborn babies often have a stuffy nose. Their noses are very small and they are getting used to making mucous. Sometimes your baby might have noisy breathing if he has a stuffy nose.
• Wipe your baby’s nose with a damp washcloth if you need to.
• Make sure that your baby does not have a fever. If your baby has a fever, call your doctor.
• If your baby is sleeping more than usual or is not feeding well, call your doctor.

If your baby is having any trouble breathing, call 911 right away. This may include if your baby any of these signs:

• Is working very hard to breathe or finds it hard to take a breath
• Grunts when he breathes
• Has chest retractions (skin pulling in around the ribs and chest when breathing)
• Has a blue or dark purple color to the nail beds, lips or gums
• Stops breathing for more than 10 seconds
• Cannot feed while trying to breathe

Thrush (White Spots in the Mouth)

Thrush is a common yeast infection in newborns. If your baby has white spots on his tongue, lips or inside the mouth, he might have thrush. Call your baby’s doctor if you think your baby has thrush. He may need medicine to get rid of thrush.
Discharge From the Vagina

Vaginal discharge is common in baby girls during the first few weeks of life. The discharge can be clear, milky or blood tinged. This is from the mother’s hormones and will go away on its own. No treatment is needed.

Swollen Breasts

It is common for babies - boys or girls - to have both breasts swell after birth. This is from the mother’s hormones and will go away on its own. No treatment is needed.

If your baby’s breast is swollen and is also red or tender, call your baby’s doctor right away. Your baby could have an infection.

Taking your Baby’s Temperature

WHEN SHOULD I TAKE MY BABY’S TEMPERATURE?
Take your baby’s temperature anytime you think he isn’t acting well or feels too hot. If your baby is crying a lot and isn’t easily comforted, he could have a fever.

HOW SHOULD I TAKE MY BABY’S TEMPERATURE?
Newborn babies need to have their temperature taken in their rectum (bottom). This is the most accurate way to take a temperature in a newborn. Follow the steps below for taking a temperature for your newborn.

• Use a digital thermometer. Do not use a glass thermometer.
• Lay your baby on his stomach across your lap or in his crib. Keep one hand on his back to hold him safely.
• You can also lay your baby on his back and lift up his legs like you do when you change his diaper
• Dip the tip of the thermometer in petroleum jelly, like Vaseline®
• Turn the thermometer on.
• Put the thermometer ½ to 1 inch (2-3cm) into your baby’s bottom. Hold it in place.
• Listen for the signal or beep.
• Remove the thermometer.
• Read the number and write it down on paper.
If your baby has any fever in the first 2 months of life that the doctor does not know about yet, call his doctor right away. A fever is a rectal temperature over 100.3°F (38°C).

If your 2-6 month old baby has any fever over 102.2°F (39°C) that the doctor does not know about yet, call his doctor right away.

**PART 3**

**Safety**

To help keep your baby safe, **NEVER, EVER:**
- Leave your baby alone except in a crib. Always be within hearing distance or use a baby monitor in case your baby needs you.
- Leave your baby alone in a car.
- Hold your baby in your lap when you ride in the car.
- Leave your baby alone in a sink or bathtub – not even to get a towel or answer the door or phone.
- Place a necklace on your baby.
- Use ribbons or strings to tie a pacifier around your baby’s neck. This can cause choking.
- Warm formula or breastmilk in a microwave. This can cause “hot spots” in the milk that can burn your baby.
- Prop a bottle to feed your baby.
- Shake your baby. This can cause brain damage, blindness and death.

**Car Seats**

**ALWAYS** use a car seat **EVERY TIME** your baby rides in the car. This is the law.
- Put your baby in the car seat without any blankets between him and the straps across his chest and lap. Be sure the straps are buckled and secure.
- Put the car seat in the back seat of the car. Face the car seat towards the rear window until he is 1 year old **AND** weighs at least 20 pounds (9 Kg).
- Strap the car seat into the car. Be sure that the straps are buckled and secure.
• Make sure there is no slack in the shoulder straps. You should not be able to fit 1 finger under the straps.
• Put the chest (retainer) clip at armpit level to keep the shoulder straps in place.
• Read the car seat instructions and your car owner’s manual. They can help you make sure that the seat is installed correctly.
• Buckle and secure the straps every time you use the car seat to carry your baby – even if it is not in the car.
• Never place the seat on a high place, such as a counter, and walk away.
• Set a good example for your family - wear your seatbelt too.

**Crib and Playpen Safety**

To help prevent crib death (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome or SIDS):
• **Always** place your baby on his back to sleep.
• Only use approved cribs, bassinets and playpens for your baby.
• Have your baby sleep in a crib or bassinette - not in a playpen. Babies should only be in a playpen when an adult is nearby watching them.
• Do not use any pillows, heavy blankets, bumper pads, stuffed toys or other toys or decorations that could cause suffocation.
• Do not allow your baby to sleep in beds with family members, on waterbeds or on couches.
• Do not overdress your baby. This can cause your baby to be too warm. Babies who are too warm have more of a chance to have SIDS when they sleep.

**Smoking**

Do not allow anyone to smoke near your baby. If anyone in your home smokes, ask them to smoke outside of your home. Babies are sensitive to cigarette smoke and can become ill from breathing in the smoke.
• Cigarette smoke gets into clothes, hair, furniture and cars. All of these things need to stay smoke free to help your baby stay healthy.
• Have a smoker remove or change their shirt or jacket before coming back into the house.
• Your baby can become ill from being around people who have smoked recently. Some illnesses include:
  – Asthma
  – Breathing problems
  – Colds and sinus infections
  – Ear infections
Shaking

NEVER shake your baby or let anyone else shake your baby. Shaking can cause blindness and brain damage. These things do not go away.

• If you are ever worried that you may want to shake or hurt your baby, call your doctor right away. Talk with your doctor about your feelings. Your doctor can help.
• If you think your baby is in danger of being shaken or being hurt by someone, call 911 right away.
• If your baby has already been shaken or hurt, call 911 right away.

Medicine Safety

To help keep your baby safe when giving him medicines:
• Only give your baby medicines that your doctor knows about.
• Read all medicine labels 3 times before giving it to your baby.
• Make sure you know how much medicine to give, how to give it and how often to give it.

• Be sure to use the dropper that comes with the medicine. Do not use a dropper from one medicine to give another medicine.
• Do not give children less than 2 years of age any over-the-counter cough or cold medicines unless your doctor tells you to.
• Keep all medicines out of the reach of babies and children.

To give your baby liquid medicines by mouth:
• Shake the medicine well.
• Measure the correct amount of medicine in a marked dropper, syringe or child medicine spoon. You can buy these at your local drug store for a dollar or two.

DO NOT use kitchen spoons – they are not accurate.
• Use a dropper, syringe or a baby bottle or nipple to give the medicine.
  – If you use a dropper or oral syringe – point the tip towards your baby’s cheek and give it slowly.
  – If you use an oral syringe that has a cap on the tip, be sure to take the cap off the tip before putting it in your baby’s mouth.
  – If you use a nipple, put the medicine in the nipple and let your baby suck on it.

- If you put your baby’s medicine into his bottle, only use a small amount of breast milk or formula to mix with the medicine. This way, you will know that he gets all the medicine.
Fall Safety

To help keep your baby safe from falls:
• Never leave your baby unattended. Even if your baby is sleeping in his crib, be nearby so you can hear him.
• Never let your baby sleep on couches or regular beds – he could roll off and fall.
• Always buckle your baby into his car or infant seat – even if he isn’t in the car.
• Never set your baby in his car or infant seat on a high surface.
• Always keep one hand on your baby while he is on the changing table. Use the strap on the table for added safety.
• Keep stairs clear and use a handrail when carrying your baby.
• Do not allow young children to carry your baby.
• Never throw your baby up into the air and catch him as you play with him.

Strangulation, Suffocation and Choking

Babies need to be protected from accidental strangulation, suffocation and choking. They can’t protect themselves when they are young and need you to watch for these things.

Strangulation means to have something press on or constrict the windpipe and cut off the air supply to the lungs. To help prevent strangulation:
• Never put pacifiers on a ribbon or cord that goes around his neck.
• Never place a necklace on your baby.
• Never place any type of cord around your baby’s neck.
• Make sure there are no window blind cords near your baby’s crib.
• Never hang stringed objects in your baby’s crib.
• Take off bibs before putting your baby in the crib.

Suffocation means to have something cover the nose and mouth and cut off the air supply to the lungs. To keep your baby safe from suffocation:
• Be sure to check the nipples on your bottles – if they have any holes or tears throw them out.
• Don’t use heavy blankets, sheets, stuffed toys, bumper pads or pillows in his bed.
• Keep your baby away from plastic bags.
• Don’t give your baby balloons or have balloons near him.
Choking means to have small things get stuck in the windpipe and cut off the air supply to the lungs. To keep your baby safe from choking:
• Keep your baby away from small objects that could get caught in his throat.
• Be sure there are no small objects like coins or buttons in your baby’s crib.
• Don’t give your baby foods until he is about 6 months old

Fire and Burn Safety

To help protect your baby from burns and fires:
• Never hold your baby when you are cooking or carrying hot liquids.
• Keep your water heater set at or below 120ºF.
• Have working smoke detectors in your home.
  – Test the batteries often and change them at least twice a year.
  – A good time to do this is when the time changes for Daylight Savings Time in spring and back to Standard Time in the fall.
• Don’t let people smoke in your home and make sure no one smokes in bed.
• Have a fire escape plan for your family. Practice it often to make sure everyone knows what to do.

CPR

It is a good idea to take a baby CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) course if you have never had one. To find out about a class in your area:
• Call the American Heart Association, the American Red Cross or your local hospital for information about classes for parents.
• You can also go to the website www.cpranytime.org to buy kits that can help you and your family learn CPR at home.
Visits to the Doctor

Your baby needs regular check-ups to be sure he stays healthy and is growing well.
• Your baby will be seen by a doctor while you are still in the hospital.
• He should also be seen within 1 week after that.
• Call your baby’s doctor while you are still in the hospital or right after coming home to schedule your baby’s first check-up.
• Your doctor will let you know the schedule your baby should follow for future check-ups.

Also call your baby’s doctor anytime you are worried about how he is doing. Call your doctor’s office before making an appointment to make sure your doctor thinks your baby needs to be seen.

WHAT KINDS OF THINGS CAN MY DOCTOR DO FOR MY BABY?
Your doctor can make sure that your baby:
• Has all of his newborn blood tests
• Is healthy and growing well
• Gets all of his vaccines.
Your doctor will also give you a chance to ask any questions that you have about your baby.

DOES MY BABY NEED VACCINES?
Yes. All babies need to have vaccines so that they stay healthy.
• Vaccines protect your baby from certain diseases.
• Some vaccines may make your baby cranky or give him a slight fever for a short time.
  Call your baby’s doctor if your baby has a fever.
• If you have questions about vaccines for your baby, talk with your doctor.

WHEN SHOULD I CALL THE DOCTOR?
Call your baby’s doctor anytime you have a concern about how your baby looks or feels.
You can also call your doctor if you have questions about how to take care of your baby.
Some good times to call include anytime your baby:
• Has a fever that your doctor does not know about. A fever is a temperature over 100.3°F (38°C) rectally
• Has a change in behavior
• Does not wake up easily
• Does not feed well
• Cannot be comforted with feeding, changing, burping, holding or rocking after about an hour
• Vomits more than 2 times in 1 hour
• Has less than 1 wet diaper every 4 – 6 hours or less than 6-8 diapers in 24 hours
• Has blood in his urine or bowel movement
• Falls or is burned
• You have any concerns about the way your baby looks or feels

When you call the doctor about a problem, have these things ready to report:
• Your baby’s name
• Your baby’s date of birth
• Your address
• Your phone number
• Any allergies your baby has
• What kind of problem your baby is having
• Any medicines you have given your baby
• Your baby’s temperature

CALL 911 OR YOUR LOCAL AMBULANCE SERVICE IF YOUR BABY:
• Is so weak and tired that he hardly responds to you
• Is working very hard to breathe or finds it hard to take a breath
• Grunts when he breathes
• Has chest retractions (skin pulling in around the ribs and chest when breathing)
• Has a blue or dark purple color to the nail beds, lips or gums
• Stops breathing for more than 10 seconds
• Cannot feed while trying to breathe
• Has any problems that need care right away.
Resources

The Family Library at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta at Egleston
efamily@choa.org - 404-785-1611

The Max Brown Family Library at Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta at Scottish Rite
maxbrownlibrary@choa.org - 404-785-2166

Books

Caring for Your Baby and Young Child, Revised Edition: Birth to Age 5 – available in English and Spanish
By the American Academy of Pediatrics

The Baby Book: Everything You Need to Know About Your Baby from Birth to Age Two
By William and Martha Sears

The Mother of All Baby Books: The Ultimate Guide to Your Baby's First Year
By Ann Douglas

What to do when Your Child Gets Sick – available in English and Spanish
By Gloria Mayer and Ann Kuklierus

What to Expect the First Year – available in English and Spanish
By Heidi Murkoff, Sandee Hathaway, & Arlene Eisenberg

Your Baby's First Year – available in English and Spanish
By the American Academy of Pediatrics

Your Newborn: Head to Toe: Everything You Want to Know About Your Baby's Health through The First Year
By Cara Familian Natterson
Websites

Baby care - www.intelihealth.com/IH/ihtIH/WSIHW000/29010/29754.html

Baby care - www.fda.gov/opacom/lowlit/medsafe.html

Child care - www.intelihealth.com/IH/ihtIH/WSIHW000/20722/20722.html?k=navx408x20722

CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and first aid – www.cpranytime.org

Feeding your baby - www.fda.gov/opacom/lowlit/feedbby.html

Health information - www.kidshealth.org and
www.medem.com/MedLB/sub_detaillb.cfm?parent_id=10&act=disp

How to give medicines - www.fda.gov/opacom/lowlit/medchld.html

How to choose a car seat -
www.intelihealth.com/IH/ihtIH/WSIHW000/29010/29720/364812.html?d=dmtContent

How to install a car seat -
www.intelihealth.com/IH/ihtIH/WSIHW000/29010/29720/364811.html?d=dmtContent

Immunizations - www.fda.gov/opacom/lowlit/shots.html

Medicine safety - www.fda.gov/opacom/lowlit/medsafe.html

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