



# Bright Futures Parent Handout 4 Month Visit

Here are some suggestions from Bright Futures experts that may be of value to your family.

## How Your Family Is Doing

- Take time for yourself.
- Take time together with your partner.
- Spend time alone with your other children.
- Encourage your partner to help care for your baby.
- Choose a mature, trained, and responsible babysitter or caregiver.
- You can talk with us about your child care choices.
- Hold, cuddle, talk to, and sing to your baby each day.
- Massaging your infant may help your baby go to sleep more easily.
- Get help if you and your partner are in conflict. Let us know. We can help.

FAMILY FUNCTIONING

## Feeding Your Baby

- Feed only breast milk or iron-fortified formula in the first 4–6 months.

### If Breastfeeding

- If you are still breastfeeding, that's great!
- Plan for pumping and storage of breast milk.

### If Formula Feeding

- Make sure to prepare, heat, and store the formula safely.
- Hold your baby so you can look at each other while feeding.
- Do not prop the bottle.
- Do not give your baby a bottle in the crib.

### Solid Food

- You may begin to feed your baby solid food when your baby is ready.
- Some of the signs your baby is ready for solids
  - Opens mouth for the spoon.
  - Sits with support.
  - Good head and neck control.
  - Interest in foods you eat.

NUTRITIONAL ADEQUACY AND GROWTH

NUTRITIONAL ADEQUACY AND GROWTH

- Avoid foods that cause allergy—peanuts, tree nuts, fish, and shellfish.
- Avoid feeding your baby too much by following the baby's signs of fullness
  - Leaning back
  - Turning away
- Ask us about programs like WIC that can help get food for you if you are breastfeeding and formula for your baby if you are formula feeding.

## Safety

- Use a rear-facing car safety seat in the back seat in all vehicles.
- Always wear a seat belt and never drive after using alcohol or drugs.
- Keep small objects and plastic bags away from your baby.
- Keep a hand on your baby on any high surface from which she can fall and be hurt.
- Prevent burns by setting your hot water heater so the temperature at the faucet is 120°F or lower.
- Do not drink hot drinks when holding your baby.
- Never leave your baby alone in bathwater, even in a bath seat or ring.
- The kitchen is the most dangerous room. Don't let your baby crawl around there; use a playpen or high chair instead.
- Do not use a baby walker.

SAFETY

## Your Changing Baby

- Keep routines for feeding, nap time, and bedtime.
- Put your baby to sleep awake or drowsy, on his back, and in a safe crib at the same time each day for naps and nighttime.

### Crib/Playpen

- Lower your baby's mattress before he can sit upright.
- Make sure the sides are always up on the crib.

INFANT DEVELOPMENT

- Do not use loose, soft bedding or toys such as quilts, pillows, or pillow-like bumper pads.
- If using a mesh playpen, make sure the openings are less than ¼ inch apart.

### Playtime

- Learn what things your baby likes and does not like.
- Encourage active play.
  - Offer mirrors, floor gyms, and colorful toys to hold.
  - Tummy time—put your baby on his tummy when awake and you can watch.
- Promote quiet play.
  - Hold and talk with your baby.
  - Read to your baby often.

### Crying

- Give your baby a pacifier or his fingers or thumb to suck when crying.

## Healthy Teeth

- Go to your own dentist twice yearly. It is important to keep your teeth healthy so that you don't pass bacteria that causes tooth decay on to your baby.
- Do not share spoons or cups with your baby or use your mouth to clean the baby's pacifier.
- Use a cold teething ring if your baby has sore gums with teething.

INFANT DEVELOPMENT

ORAL HEALTH

## What to Expect at Your Baby's 6 Month Visit

### We will talk about

- Introducing solid food
- Getting help with your baby
- Home and car safety
- Brushing your baby's teeth
- Reading to and teaching your baby

Poison Help: 1-800-222-1222

Child safety seat inspection:  
1-866-SEATCHECK; seatcheck.org



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# Important Milestones By The End Of 3 Months

Babies develop at their own pace, so it's impossible to tell exactly when your child will learn a given skill. The developmental milestones listed below will give you a general idea of the changes you can expect, but don't be alarmed if your own baby's development takes a slightly different course.

## Social and Emotional

- Begins to develop a social smile
- Enjoys playing with other people and may cry when playing stops
- Becomes more expressive and communicates more with face and body
- Imitates some movements and facial expressions

## Movement

- Raises head and chest when lying on stomach
- Supports upper body with arms when lying on stomach
- Stretches legs out and kicks when lying on stomach or back
- Opens and shuts hands
- Pushes down on legs when feet are placed on a firm surface
- Brings hand to mouth
- Takes swipes at dangling objects with hands
- Grasps and shakes hand toys

## Vision

- Watches faces intently
- Follows moving objects
- Recognizes familiar objects and people at a distance
- Starts using hands and eyes in coordination

## Hearing and Speech

- Smiles at the sound of your voice
- Begins to babble
- Begins to imitate some sounds
- Turns head toward direction of sound

## Developmental Health Watch

Alert your child's doctor or nurse if your child displays any of the following signs of possible developmental delay for this age range.

- Does not seem to respond to loud noises
- Does not notice hands by 2 months
- Does not follow moving objects with eyes by 2 to 3 months
- Does not grasp and hold objects by 3 months
- Does not smile at people by 3 months
- Cannot support head well by 3 months
- Does not reach for and grasp toys by 3 to 4 months
- Does not babble by 3 to 4 months
- Does not bring objects to mouth by 4 months
- Begins babbling, but does not try to imitate any of your sounds by 4 months
- Does not push down with legs when feet are placed on a firm surface by 4 months
- Has trouble moving one or both eyes in all directions
- Crosses eyes most of the time (occasional crossing of the eyes is normal in these first months)
- Does not pay attention to new faces, or seems very frightened by new faces or surroundings
- Experiences a dramatic loss of skills he or she once had

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[www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)



Learn the Signs. Act Early.

# Home Safety Checklist

Is your house a safe place for your child to live and play? The following safety checklist can help you prevent serious injuries or even death. Though it addresses common safety concerns, it's important to remember that every house is different and no checklist is complete. Because there may be other safety concerns in your house, a more thorough safety check is recommended at least every 6 months.

## Your child's bedroom

### Changing table

- Never leave your child unattended. Keep supplies within arm's reach and always use the safety belt to help prevent falls. Try to keep a hand on your child at all times, even when using the safety belt.
- Make sure drapery and blind cords are out of reach. Loose cords can strangle children. Keep the cords tied up high with no loops. Check the cords in other rooms as well.
- If you use baby powder, pour it out carefully and keep the powder away from baby's face. Published reports indicate that talc or cornstarch in baby powder can injure a baby's lungs.

### Crib

- Lower the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). All healthy babies younger than 1 year should sleep on their backs—at nap time and at night. The safest place to sleep is in a crib with a firm mattress with a fitted sheet. Keep pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, and stuffed toys out of your baby's crib. They can cover your baby's face—even if she is lying on her back. Also, bulky items left in the crib could be used as a step for climbing out when your baby is able to stand.
- Don't hang anything with strings or ribbon over cribs.
- Make sure the crib has no raised corner posts or cutouts. Loose clothing can get snagged on these and strangle your baby. Also, the slots on the crib should be no more than  $2\frac{3}{8}$  inches apart. Widely spaced slots can trap small heads.



- Use a mattress that fits snugly in the crib so your baby cannot slip in between the sides of the crib.
- Tighten all the screws, bolts, and other hardware securely to prevent the crib from collapsing.

### Other bedroom items

- Night-light.** Keep night-lights away from drapes or bedding where they could start a fire. Buy only *cool* night-lights that do not get hot.
- Smoke alarms.** Install smoke alarms outside every bedroom (or any area where someone sleeps), in furnace areas, and on every level of your home, including the basement. Buy alarms with long-life lithium batteries. Standard batteries should be changed every year. Test alarms every month to make sure they are working properly.
- Window guards.** Make sure window guards are secured to prevent a child from falling out the window.

- Outlets.** Use plug protectors in all outlets in your home. Children can be burned or shocked from sticking their fingers or other objects into the holes.
- Toy chest.** The best toy chest is a box or basket without a lid. However, if it has a lid, make sure it has safe hinges that hold the lid open and do not pinch. The chest should also have air holes just in case your child gets trapped inside.
- Humidifier.** Use a cool-mist humidifier to avoid burns. Clean it often to avoid bacteria and mold growth.

## The kitchen

- Store sharp knives or other sharp utensils and dishwasher detergent and other cleaning supplies in a cabinet with child locks.
- Keep chairs and stools away from counters and the stove where a child could climb up and get hurt.
- Use the back burners and point pot handles toward the back of the stove to keep them out of your child's reach. Keep your child away from the stove when someone is cooking.
- Keep electrical appliances out of your child's reach and unplugged when not in use. Appliance cords should be tucked away so they cannot be reached by a child.
- Use a high chair that is sturdy and has a seat belt with a crotch strap.
- Keep a working fire extinguisher in the kitchen and know how and when to use it.

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## The bathroom

- Always stay within arm's reach of your infant or young child when he is in the bathtub. Many bathtub drownings happen (even in a few inches of water) when a parent leaves an infant or young child alone or with another young child.
- Keep the bathroom door closed when not in use. Keep the toilet seat cover down and consider using a toilet lid latch. Use a doorknob cover to keep your child out of the bathroom when you are not there.
- Use a nonskid bath mat in the bathtub and on the floor.
- Keep all medicines, toiletries, cosmetics, and cleaning supplies out of your child's reach. Store these items in cabinets with child locks. Make sure all medicines have child-resistant caps on them.
- Unplug and store hair dryers, curling irons, and other electrical appliances out of your child's reach.
- Make sure the outlets in the bathroom have ground fault interrupters (GFIs).
- The hottest temperature at the faucet should be no more than 120°F to avoid burns. In many cases you can adjust your hot water heater.

## The family room

- Pad edges and corners of tables.
- Keep houseplants out of your child's reach because some may be poisonous.
- Make sure TVs and other heavy items (such as lamps) are secure so they don't tip over.
- Check electrical cords. Replace any cords that are worn, frayed, or damaged. Never overload outlets. Cords should run *behind* furniture and not hang down for children to pull on them. Remove unused cords.

- Place a barrier around the fireplace or other heat sources.
- Store matches and lighters out of your child's reach or in a cabinet with child locks. Teach your child that matches and lighters are to be used by adults only.

## Throughout the home

Take a look throughout your home and check for the following:

- A home is safest without firearms. If you must have a gun, make sure the gun is stored unloaded and unlocked in a safe or with a trigger lock, and bullets are locked in another place.
- Block all stairs with gates.
- Make sure all the rooms in your home are free from small parts, plastic bags, small toys, coins, and balloons that your child could choke on. Frequently check in, around, and under furniture.
- Make sure to have a plan of escape from your home in case of a fire. Review and practice the plan with your family.
- Post the number for Poison Control (1-800-222-1222) on all your phones.



- Teach your child how to call 911 in an emergency.
- Only use candles when an adult is in the room. Blow out candles if you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Teach your child to never pick and eat anything from an indoor or outdoor plant.

## The playground

- Make sure swings are made of soft materials, such as rubber, plastic, or canvas.
- Use wood chips, mulch, or shredded rubber under play equipment. It should be at least 9 inches deep for play equipment up to 7 feet high. Frequently rake the material back under the swings and slides to keep it the right depth.
- Make sure home playground equipment is put together correctly, sits on a level surface, and is anchored firmly to the ground.

## The pool

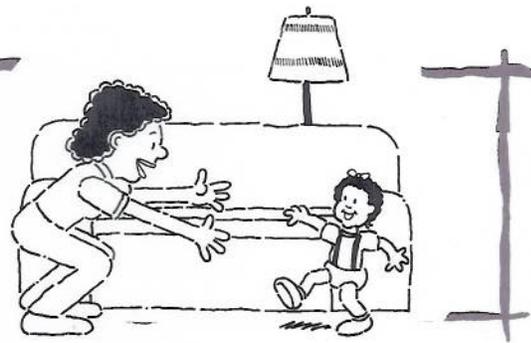
- Make sure to have a 4-foot fence around all sides of the pool to separate the pool from the house. A child should not be able to climb the fence. The gate should open outward and self-close and self-latch with the latch high out of a child's reach.
- Always have rescue equipment (such as a shepherd hook or life preserver). Keep a telephone by the pool with your local emergency number (usually 911) clearly posted.
- Learn basic first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Because of the time it might take for help to arrive, your CPR skills can save your child's life. CPR performed by bystanders has been shown to improve outcomes in drowning victims.



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# Your Child's Growth: Developmental Milestones



Watching a young child grow is a wonderful and unique experience for a parent. Learning to sit up, walk, and talk are some of the major developmental milestones your child will achieve.

Although no two children develop at the same rate, they should be able to do certain things at certain ages. This list of milestones by age is a good way to see how your child is doing. Keep in mind that a "No" answer to any of these questions does not mean that there is a problem. However, if you see large differences between your child and what is listed here, talk with your pediatrician.

## 3 Months

- When your baby is lying on his back, does he move both arms equally well? Check "No" if your baby uses only one arm all the time.  
 Yes  No
- Does your baby make sounds such as gurgling, cooing, babbling, or other noises besides crying?  
 Yes  No
- Does your baby respond to your voice?  
 Yes  No
- Are your baby's hands frequently open?  
 Yes  No
- Can your baby hold his head up for a few seconds when held upright?  
 Yes  No

## 6 Months

- Does your baby play with her hands by touching them together?  
 Yes  No
- Does your baby turn her head to sounds coming from a different room?  
 Yes  No
- Can your baby roll over from stomach to back or from back to stomach?  
 Yes  No
- When you hold your baby under her arms, does she seem like she's trying to stand?  
 Yes  No
- When your baby is on her stomach, does she try to push up with her hands?  
 Yes  No
- Does your baby see small objects, like crumbs?  
 Yes  No
- Does your baby produce a string of sounds?  
 Yes  No
- Does she react to the emotions of others?  
 Yes  No

- Does your baby relax when you read her a story?  
 Yes  No
- Does your baby like looking at herself in a mirror?  
 Yes  No
- Does your baby reach for you?  
 Yes  No

## 9 Months

- When you come up quietly behind your baby, does he sometimes turn his head as though he hears you? (Only check "Yes" if you have seen him respond to quiet sounds or whispers.)  
 Yes  No
- Can your baby sit without support and without holding up his body with his hands?  
 Yes  No
- Does your baby crawl or creep on his hands and knees?  
 Yes  No
- Does your baby hold his bottle?  
 Yes  No
- Does your baby drop or throw toys on purpose?  
 Yes  No
- Does he bang and shake his toys?  
 Yes  No
- When you show your baby a book, does he get excited and try to grab and taste it?  
 Yes  No
- Is your baby wary of people he doesn't know?  
 Yes  No
- Does your baby make sounds that use vowels and consonants?  
 Yes  No

## 12 Months

- Does your baby like to play peekaboo?  
 Yes  No
- Does your baby pull up to stand?  
 Yes  No
- Does your baby walk holding on to furniture?  
 Yes  No
- Does your baby say at least one word other than "ma-ma" or "da-da"?  
 Yes  No

- Does your baby turn her head in the direction of where a sound is made?  
 Yes  No
- Does your baby copy familiar behaviors, like using a cup or telephone?  
 Yes  No
- Does your baby turn her books face up, but turn several pages at once?  
 Yes  No
- Does your baby look for and find toys?  
 Yes  No
- Does your baby like to explore objects and spaces?  
 Yes  No

## 18 Months

- Can your child use a cup without spilling?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child walk across a large room without falling or wobbling from side to side?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child take off his own shoes?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child feed himself?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child clearly look to you in stressful situations?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child have temper tantrums?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child say at least 4 to 10 words?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child point to pictures that you name in a book?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child pretend to talk?  
 Yes  No

## 2 Years

- Can your child say things like "all gone," "go bye-bye," or other 2-word sentences?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child say about 50 words?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child take off her own clothes? (Diapers, hats, and socks do not count.)  
 Yes  No
- Can your child run without falling? (Occasional falls do not count.)  
 Yes  No
- Does your child look at pictures in a book?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child pretend to read to you?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child tell you what she wants?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child repeat words others say?  
 Yes  No

- Can your child point to at least one named body part?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child like to play with or around other children?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child show increasing independence, wanting to do things her way?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child like to collect or hoard things?  
 Yes  No

## 3 Years

- Can your child name at least one picture when you look at animal books together?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child enjoy sitting together for at least 5 minutes for story time?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child answer "what" questions about the story that you have just read together?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child throw a ball overhand from a distance of 5 feet?  
 Yes  No
- Is your child easily understood by most adults?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child help put things away?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child answer the question, "Are you a boy or girl?"  
 Yes  No
- Can your child name at least one color?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child talk in 3-word sentences most of the time?  
 Yes  No

## 4 Years

- Can your child pedal a tricycle at least 10 feet forward?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child play hide-and-seek, cops-and-robbers, or other games where he takes turns and follows rules?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child turn paper pages in a book one at a time?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child retell stories that are familiar?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child tell you what action is taking place in a picture?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child use action words (verbs)?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child play pretend games, such as with toys, dolls, animals, or even an imaginary friend?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child copy a circle?  
 Yes  No

- Does your child pretend to write, making marks on a page that only he can read?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child use 4- or 5-word sentences?  
 Yes  No

## 5 Years

- Can your child button her clothing or her doll's clothes?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child react well when you leave her with a friend or sitter?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child name at least 3 colors?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child walk down stairs alternating her feet?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child jump with her feet apart?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child point while counting at least 3 different objects?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child name a coin correctly?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child sit and listen to a 10- to 20-minute story?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child copy a square?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child name at least some letters of the alphabet when she sees them?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child identify and print the first letter in her name?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child recognize and name several single numbers?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child recognize common street and store signs (eg, "Stop," "Open")?  
 Yes  No

## 6 Years

- Can your child tie his shoes?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child dress himself without help?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child catch a small bouncing ball? (Large balls do not count.)  
 Yes  No

- Can your child skip?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child tell his age?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child repeat at least 4 numbers in the proper sequence?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child recognize and name at least 10 letters in the alphabet?  
 Yes  No
- Does your child know the sounds of most letters of the alphabet?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child recognize and read 15 or more common words?  
 Yes  No
- Can your child copy a few simple words from a book?  
 Yes  No

Remember, these milestones are an aid, not a test. If you have any questions or concerns about your child, talk with your pediatrician. If there is a problem, early treatment is important.

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# First Steps to a Healthy Smile

Tooth decay is the number-one dental problem among preschoolers, but it can be prevented. Starting children with good dental habits from an early age will help them grow up with healthy smiles. The following is important information about how to care for your child's teeth from birth to 24 months of age and beyond.

## Baby teeth are important!

Tooth decay can develop as soon as the first tooth appears. It's important to care for your child's baby teeth because they act as placeholders for adult teeth. If baby teeth are lost too early, the teeth that are left may move and not leave any room for the adult teeth to come in. And tooth decay in baby teeth can be painful and cause health problems like infections, which can at times be life-threatening. It can also lead to teasing and speech development problems.

## How to care for your child's teeth

### Birth to 12 months

- Good dental habits should begin before the first tooth appears. After feedings, gently brush your baby's gums using water on a baby toothbrush that has soft bristles. Or wipe them with a clean washcloth.
- Ask about fluoride. After the first tooth appears, ask your child's doctor if your baby is getting enough fluoride. Many experts recommend using a fluoride-free toothpaste before the age of 2, but check with your child's doctor or dentist first.
- Schedule your baby's well-child visits. During these visits your child's doctor will check your baby's mouth.
- Schedule a dental checkup. If your baby is at high risk for tooth decay, your child's doctor will recommend that your baby see a dentist.

### 12 to 24 months

- Brush! Brush your child's teeth 2 times a day using water on a baby toothbrush that has soft bristles. The best times are after breakfast and before bed.
- Limit juice. Make sure your child doesn't drink more than 1 small cup of juice each day and only at mealtimes.
- Consult with your child's dentist or doctor about sucking habits. Sucking too strongly on a pacifier, a thumb, or fingers can affect the shape of the mouth and how the top and bottom teeth line up. This is called your child's "bite." Ask your child's dentist or doctor to help you look for changes in your child's bite and how to help your child ease out of his sucking habit.
- Schedule a dental checkup. Take your child for a dental checkup if he has not had one.

### 24 months

- Brush! Help your child brush her teeth 2 times a day with a child-sized toothbrush that has soft bristles. There are brushes designed to address the different needs of children at all ages, ensuring that you can select a toothbrush that is appropriate for your child.  
Encourage her to brush her teeth on her own. However, to make sure your child's teeth are clean, you should brush them again. If your child doesn't want her teeth brushed, it may help to turn it into a game. For example, the toothbrush can look upstairs and downstairs in the mouth for missing treasure in the teeth.
- Use fluoride toothpaste. You can start using fluoride toothpaste, which helps prevent cavities. Teach your child not to swallow it. Use a pea-sized amount or less and smear the paste into the bristles. Swallowing too much fluoride toothpaste can make white or brown spots on your child's adult teeth. If your child doesn't like the taste of the toothpaste, try another flavor or use plain water.
- Floss. You can begin flossing your child's teeth as soon as 2 teeth touch each other. But not all children need their teeth flossed at this age, so check with your dentist first.
- Schedule a dental checkup. Take your child for a dental checkup at least once a year.

## Eating and tooth decay

Parents, especially if they have a history of cavities, can pass germs that cause cavities and gum disease if they share food or drinks with their children. Germs can also be spread when parents lick their children's spoon, fork, or pacifier. This is why it is important for parents to not share food or drinks with their children.

The following are other ways parents can help prevent tooth decay in their babies and children:

- If you put your child to bed with a bottle, fill it only with water.
- If your child drinks from a bottle or sippy cup, make sure to fill it only with water when it's not mealtime.
- If your child wants a snack, offer a healthy snack like fruits or vegetables. (To avoid choking, make sure anything you give your child is soft, easy to swallow, and cut into small pieces no larger than one-half inch.)
- Avoid sweet or sticky snacks like candy, cookies, or Fruit Roll-Ups. There is sugar in foods like crackers and chips too. They should only be eaten at mealtime.
- If your child is thirsty, give him water or milk. If your child drinks milk at bedtime, make sure to clean his teeth afterward. Don't let your child sip drinks that have sugar and acid, like juices, sports drinks, flavored drinks, lemonade, soda pop, or flavored teas.

## What is a cavity?

Your child's teeth are protected by an outer coating called *enamel*. Tooth decay happens when germs in the mouth mix with sugar in foods and drinks. The germs then make acids that break down the enamel. Cavities are holes in the enamel caused by tooth decay.

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From your doctor

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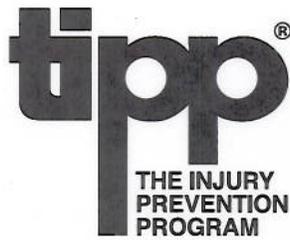
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# Birth to 6 Months



## BIRTH TO 6 MONTHS

### Safety for Your Child

Did you know that hundreds of children younger than 1 year die every year in the United States because of injuries — most of which could be prevented?

Often, injuries happen because parents are not aware of what their children can do. Children *learn fast*, and before you know it, your child will be *wiggling* off a bed or *reaching* for your cup of hot coffee.

#### Car Injuries

**Car crashes** are a great threat to your child's life and health. Most injuries and deaths from car crashes **can be prevented** by the use of car safety seats. Your child, besides being much safer in a car safety seat, will behave better, so you can pay attention to your driving. Make your newborn's first ride home from the hospital a safe one — in a car safety seat. Your infant should ride in the back seat in a rear-facing car seat.

**Make certain that your baby's car safety seat is installed correctly. Read and follow the instructions that come with the car safety seat and the sections in the owners' manual of your car on using car safety seats correctly. Use the car safety seat EVERY time your child is in the car.**

NEVER put an infant in the front seat of a car with a passenger air bag.



#### Falls

Babies *wiggle* and *move* and *push* against things with their feet soon after they are born. Even these very first movements can result in a fall. As your baby grows and is able to roll over, he or she may fall off of things unless protected. **Do not leave your baby alone** on changing tables, beds, sofas, or chairs. **Put your baby in a safe place** such as a crib or playpen when you cannot hold him.

Your baby may be able to crawl as early as 6 months. **Use gates on stairways and close doors** to keep your baby out of rooms where he or she might get hurt. **Install operable window guards** on all windows above the first floor.

**Do not use a baby walker.** Your baby may tip the walker over, fall out of it, or fall down stairs and seriously injure his head. Baby walkers let children get to places where they can pull heavy objects or hot food on themselves.

**If your child has a serious fall or does not act normally after a fall, call your doctor.**



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American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



## Burns

At 3 to 5 months, babies will wave their fists and grab at things. **NEVER carry your baby and hot liquids, such as coffee, or foods at the same time.** Your baby can get burned. You can't handle both! To protect your child from tap water scalds, the hottest temperature at the faucet should be no more than 120°F. In many cases you can adjust your water heater.

**If your baby gets burned, immediately put the burned area in cold water. Keep the burned area in cold water for a few minutes to cool it off. Then cover the burn loosely with a dry bandage or clean cloth and call your doctor.**

To protect your baby from house fires, be sure you have a working smoke alarm on every level of your home, especially in furnace and sleeping areas. Test the alarms every month. It is best to use smoke alarms that use long-life batteries, but if you do not, change the batteries at least once a year.

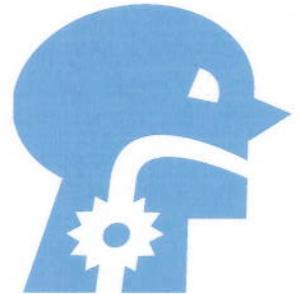


## Choking and Suffocation

Babies explore their environment by putting anything and everything into their mouths. **NEVER leave small objects in your baby's reach, even for a moment.** NEVER feed your baby hard pieces of food such as chunks of raw carrots, apples, hot dogs, grapes, peanuts, and popcorn. Cut all the foods you feed your baby into thin pieces to prevent choking. **Be prepared if your baby starts to choke. Ask your doctor to recommend the steps you need to know. Learn how to save the life of a choking child.**

To prevent possible suffocation and reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), **your baby should always sleep on his or her back. NEVER put your baby on a water bed, bean bag, or anything that is soft enough to cover the face and block air to the nose and mouth.**

**Plastic wrappers and bags** form a tight seal if placed over the mouth and nose and may suffocate your child. Keep them away from your baby.



From Your Doctor

The information in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on the individual facts and circumstances.