

## Baby Safety Tips

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## 12 Must Have Products That Will Keep Your Child Safe Around The Home

About 2–1/2 million children are injured or killed by hazards in the home each year. The good news is that many of these incidents can be prevented by using simple child safety devices on the market today.

You can childproof your home for a fraction of what it would cost to have a professional do it. And safety devices are easy to find. You can buy them at hardware stores, baby equipment shops, supermarkets, drug stores, home and linen stores, and through mail order catalogues.

Here are some child safety devices that can help prevent many injuries to young children. The red numbers correspond to those on the image following the text.

1. Use Safety Latches and Locks for cabinets and drawers in kitchens, bathrooms, and other areas to help prevent poisonings and other injuries. Safety latches and locks on cabinets and drawers can help prevent children from gaining access to medicines and household cleaners, as well as knives and other sharp objects.

Look for safety latches and locks that adults can easily

install and use, but are sturdy enough to withstand pulls

and tugs from children. Safety latches are not a guarantee of protection, but they can make it more difficult for children to reach dangerous substances.

Typical cost of a safety latch or lock: less than \$2.

2. Use Safety Gates to help prevent falls down stairs and to keep children away from dangerous areas. Safety gates can help keep children away from stairs or rooms that have hazards in them. Look for safety gates that children cannot dislodge easily, but that adults can open and close without difficulty. For the top of stairs, gates that screw to the wall are more secure than "pressure gates."

Typical cost of a safety gate: \$13 to \$40.

3. Use Door Knob Covers and Door Locks to help prevent children from entering rooms and other areas with possible dangers. Door knob covers and door locks can help keep children away from places with hazards, including swimming pools.

Be sure the door knob cover is sturdy enough not to break, but allows a door to be opened quickly by an adult in case of emergency. By restricting access to potentially hazardous rooms in the home, door knob

covers could help prevent many kinds of injuries.

Typical cost of a door knob cover: \$1 and door lock: \$5 and up.

4. Use Anti–Scald Devices for faucets and shower heads and set your water heater temperature to 120 degrees Fahrenheit to help prevent burns from hot water. Anti–scald devices for regulating water temperature can help prevent burns.

Typical cost of an anti–scald device: \$6 to \$30.

5. Use Smoke Detectors on every level of your home and near bedrooms to alert you to fires. Smoke detectors are essential safety devices for protection against fire deaths and injuries.

Check smoke detectors once a month to make sure they're working. If detectors are battery–operated, change batteries at least once a year or consider using 10–year batteries.

Typical cost of a smoke detector: less than \$10.

6. Use Window Guards and Safety Netting to help prevent falls from windows, balconies, decks, and landings. Window guards and safety netting for balconies and decks can help prevent serious falls.

Typical cost of a window guard or safety netting: \$8 to \$16.

7. Use Corner and Edge Bumpers to help prevent injuries from falls against sharp edges of furniture and fireplaces. Corner and edge bumpers can be used with furniture and fireplace hearths to help prevent injuries from falls or to soften falls against sharp or rough edges.

Typical cost of a corner and edge bumper: \$1 and up.

8. Use Outlet Covers and Outlet Plates to help prevent electrocution. Outlet covers and outlet plates can help protect children from electrical shock and possible electrocution.

Be sure the outlet protectors cannot be easily removed by children and are large enough so that children cannot choke on them.

Typical cost of an outlet cover: less than \$2.

9. Use a Carbon Monoxide (CO) Detector outside bedrooms to help prevent CO poisoning. A carbon monoxide (CO) detector can help prevent CO poisoning. Consumers should install CO detectors

near sleeping areas in their homes. Households that should use CO detectors include those with gas or oil heat or with attached garages.

Typical cost of a carbon monoxide (CO) detector:  
\$30 to  
\$70.

10. Cut Window Blind Cords; use Safety Tassels and Inner Cord Stops to help prevent children from strangling in blind cord loops. Window blind cord safety tassels on miniblinds and tension devices on vertical blinds and drapery cords can help prevent deaths and injuries from strangulation in the loops of cords. Inner cord stops can help prevent strangulation in the inner cords of window blinds.

For older miniblinds, cut the cord loop, remove the buckle, and put safety tassels on each cord. Be sure that older vertical blinds and drapery cords have tension or tie-down devices to hold the cords tight. When buying new miniblinds, verticals, and draperies, ask for safety features to prevent child strangulation.

11. Use Door Stops and Door Holders to help prevent injuries to fingers and hands. Door stops and door holders on doors and door hinges can help prevent small

fingers and hands from being pinched or crushed in doors and door hinges.

Typical cost of a door stop and door holder: less than \$4.

12. Use a Cordless Phone to make it easier to continuously watch young children, especially when they're in bathtubs, swimming pools, or other potentially dangerous areas.

Cordless phones help you watch your child continuously, without leaving the vicinity to answer a phone call. Cordless phones are especially helpful when children are in or near water, whether it's the bathtub, the swimming pool, or the beach.

Typical cost of a cordless phone: \$30 and up.



## Traveling With A Baby – A Checklist

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Traveling with a baby can sometimes mean that you are so consumed with ensuring that you have everything you need to care for the baby on the trip that you forget things you need for yourself. The best thing to do is to prepare a checklist of what you need and then check off each item as you pack it.

A sample checklist should include the following items:

Diapers/ pampers

Blankets

Sleepers

Baby wipes

Baby lotion and soap

Extra pacifiers

Bottle

Formula, food, water and/or juice

Resealable plastic bags

Extra clothes – at least one or two outfits per day

Nightlight

Car seat

Portable crib

Collapsible stroller

Sun hat and sun screen Toys

Plastic for use in changing the baby

Any necessary medicines

Extra shirt for yourself

Burping pad

Washable bibs

Feeding spoons

Kettle, if the hotel room does not have kitchen facilities

The packing for a trip involving a baby should start weeks in advance to ensure that no detail is overlooked. As you pack each item or article, check to make sure you have added extra in case of accidents.

Simply go through a sample day at home and make a list of everything the baby needs when not travelling. Add extra to the list. Bring a camera and plenty of film or if you use a digital ensure that the memory card can store lots of pictures.

## Car Safety Tips

The single biggest threat to your babies life as documented every year by every relevant US government agency is the threat when they are travelling in the car with you, friends or

family.

Here are a few tips to make sure your baby will always be safe when travelling in a car.

## Car Seats

When buying a car seat, make sure you look for;

A label that clearly states that it meets or exceeds the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards

That the car seat is setup exactly and will suit a child of your weight and height

Really be that the seat you choose fits your child perfectly – Infants one year or younger and up to 20 pounds must be placed in a rear-facing seat, toddlers (older than 1 year and between 20 and 40 pounds) may use a forward-facing seat, and children who are between 40 and 80 pounds need to be placed in a booster seat.

Check recent car seat recalls before making a purchase

Be aware of the type of seat belts your car has; all car seats are not compatible with all seat belts

Consider choosing a seat that is upholstered in fabric – it may be more comfortable for your child.

### The Best Way to Protect Your Children in the Car by Susan Dunn

Car seats may be required but there's one other thing you should be doing to protect your children in the car, because the best-constructed car seat in the world doesn't insure they'll live through an accident.

Prevention is the best cure, and driver error has been documented to contribute to over 90% of collisions.

Your distractibility is crucial, and once again one of our best technological advances has proven to be a very mixed blessing. You might even say a very mixed curse.

And what is that?

It's the conversation you're having with your sister about the party next week. Or the quick call to verify directions or to say you're running late. Or worst of all, an intense or complex relationship issue you're discussing with your spouse. ON THE CELL PHONE WHILE DRIVING.

It doesn't matter whether it's hand-held or mounted, and it doesn't matter whether you're dialing, chatting, intensely relating, or hanging up. It's dangerous.

According to the Fatal Analysis Reporting System, in one analysis of fatal accidents involving cell phone use, the cell phone-using drivers were all in what's called "the striking vehicle." This means they either hit a stationary object, or left their lane of traffic and struck a vehicle or obstacle. In these crashes, 75% of the drivers were engaged in conversation, 13% were dialing, and 13% were hanging up.

And worse yet – of those engaged in

conversation, 1/3 were using mounted phones in the hands-free mode.

Risk of collision when using a cell is 4 times higher regardless of your age, driving experience, of experience with a cell phone, and – get this: the hands-free units offer no safety advantage.

People using cell phones simply take longer to react, and miss things that would allow them to avoid collisions. Even when not at-fault, cell users were unable to avoid collisions with others.

Your cell phone records can and will be subpoenaed in case of a lawsuit involving an accident, by the way.

So why not, when you strap the kids into their car seats, lay the cell phone down on the floor beside them and turn off the ringer?

Cell phones are great for productivity and personal safety. Just make sure you aren't using yours to call the EMS after a car accident caused by the fact you were using yours while driving.

## Crib Safety Tips

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### Crib Design

Dispose of antique cribs with decorative cutouts, corner posts or lead paint.

The space between the slats should be no more than 2–3/8 inches apart to prevent infants from getting their head stuck between them. Cribs manufactured after 1974 must meet this and other strict safety standards.

The corner posts should be the same height as the end panels or less than 1/16 of an inch higher than the end panels.

No cut-out areas on the headboard or footboard so a baby's head cannot get trapped.

The top rails of crib sides, in their raised position, should be at least 26 inches above the top of the mattress support at its lowest



position.

As soon as the child can pull himself to a standing position, set and keep the mattress at its lowest position. Stop using the crib once the height of the top rails is less than three-fourths of the child's height.

### Mattress

The mattress should fit snugly next to the crib so that there is no gap. If two adult fingers can be placed between the mattress and the crib, the mattress should be immediately replaced.

Do not use plastic packaging materials, such as dry cleaning bags, as mattress covers. Plastic film can cling to children's faces and should never be in or near the crib.

Put your baby to sleep on his or her back or side in a crib with a firm, flat mattress and no soft bedding underneath. Talk to your pediatrician about which sleeping position is best for you child.

### Crib Hardware

The drop side(s) of the crib should require two distinct actions or a minimum force of ten pounds with one action to release the latch or the locks to prevent accidental release by the child.

The crib hardware should be checked for disengaged, broken, bent or loose pieces. Special checks should be made of the mattress support hangers and brackets so they cannot drop. The hardware and the crib should be smooth and free of sharp edges, points and rough surfaces.

### Crib Accessories

Bumper pads should cover the entire inside perimeter of the crib and tie or snap in place. Bumper pads should have at least six straps or ties and any excess length of straps or ties should be cut off. Bumper pads should never be used in lieu of proper spacing between the slats and should be removed from the crib as soon as the child can pull himself to a standing position.

Teething rails that are damaged should be fixed, replaced or removed immediately.

To prevent possible entanglement, mobiles and crib gyms, which are meant to be hung over or across the crib, should be removed when the child is five months old or when he begins to push up onto hands and knees or can pull himself up.

Keep the crib clear of plastic sheets, pillows, and large stuffed animals or toys. These can be suffocation hazards or can enable youngsters to climb out of the crib.

Any cloth or vinyl items that are loose or torn should be replaced or repaired immediately.

### Crib Environment

Do not place crib next to a window. Drapery and blind cords pose an entanglement hazard and window screens are not intended to keep a child in, only insects out.

Install smoke detectors. Follow the manufacturer's directions for placement. Check at least once a month to make sure battery and smoke detector are in good working condition.

Lead is a health hazard, especially to young children. It can be found in dust and soil off busy roadways, in old paint on walls, toys and furniture and sometimes in paint on new imported items. If you think your child has taken in leaded paint or soil, or you need help with identifying or removing lead paint, call the National Safety Council's National Lead Information Center at 800-424-5323.

## How To Reduce The Risk Of Poisoning In Your House Hold!

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**YOUNG CHILDREN WILL EAT AND DRINK  
ALMOST ANYTHING!**

Keep all liquids and solids that may be poisonous out of their reach. Use child-resistant packaging to help prevent poisonings with medicines and household chemicals. Each year poison control centers report nearly one million children under the age of five are exposed to potentially poisonous medicines and household chemicals.

Medicines (especially iron pills and food supplements containing iron), household substances, insect sprays, kerosene, lighter fluid, some furniture polishes, turpentine, paints, solvents, and products containing lye and acids are most frequently the cause of accidental poisoning among children.

**ALWAYS RETURN TO SAFE STORAGE  
IMMEDIATELY (locked up – away from**

children)

Never leave a bottle of aspirin or other pills where children can reach it Return it to a safe place immediately after using.

## MEDICINES ...

are often swallowed by young children who find medicines where their grandparents have left them. Grandparents – and all adults – should use child-resistant closures whenever young children are around. Keep medicines out of reach – and out of sight – of all

## children. HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS

Read labels before using any household product and follow the directions carefully. Store these products so that children cannot reach them.

Always resecure child-resistant packaging.

## KEEP ALL PRODUCTS IN ORIGINAL CONTAINERS

Never place kerosene, anti-freeze, paints, or

solvents in cups, glasses, milk or soft-drink bottles, or other utensils customarily used for food or drinks.

Never transfer products to a bottle without a child-resistant closure.

### DESTROY OLD MEDICATIONS

Pour contents down drain or toilet, and rinse container before discarding. Do not put container with its contents into trash.

### KEEP FOODS AND HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS SEPARATED

Cleaning fluids, detergents, lye, soap powders, insecticides, and other everyday household products should be stored away from food and medications. Death could be the result of a mistaken identity.

### NEVER CALL MEDICINE "CANDY"

Children should not be deceived by having flavored medicines called "candy." When left alone, they may locate the bottle and eat or drink its contents.

### GROWING CHILDREN ARE CURIOUS ABOUT...

things that glitter pretty colored pills bottles and containers of all kinds. These arouse their natural curiosity. If a child is in the crawling stage, arrange to keep household products in places other than below the kitchen sink unless the cabinet is locked or secured with child safety latches.

If the child is walking, be certain that bottles and boxes containing medicines or household products are put away before answering the telephone or doorbell.

If he is able to climb, find a shelf that is completely beyond his ability to reach, or, better yet, lock these products in a cabinet or



closet.

After using a product, always re–secure the child–resistant closure.

To reduce the risk of poisoning:

1. Keep household products and medicines out of reach and out of sight of children, preferably in a locked cabinet or closet. Even if you must leave the room for only an instant, put the container in a safe spot.
2. Store medicines and dietary supplements (especially iron pills) separately from other household products and keep these items in their original containers – never in cups or soft–drink bottles.
3. Be sure that all products are properly labelled, and read the label before using.
4. Always turn the light on when giving or taking medicine to be sure you have the right medicine and the correct measure or count of the dosage.

5. Since children tend to imitate adults – avoid taking medications in their presence. Avoid drinking medicine from the bottle.

6. Refer to medicines by their proper names. They are not candies.

7. Clean out your medicine cabinet periodically. Get rid of old medicines by flushing them down the drain or toilet, rinsing the container in water, and then discarding it.

8. Ask for and use household products which are available in child resistant packaging. Insist on safety packaging for prescription medicines. Resecure safety feature carefully after using. Safety packaging gives extra protection to your children.

## Poison Lookout Checklist

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The home areas listed below are the most common site of accidental poisonings. Follow this checklist to learn how to correct situations that may lead to poisonings. If you answer "No" to any questions, fix the situation quickly. Your goal is to have all your answers "Yes."

### THE KITCHEN

Yes    No

Do all harmful products in the cabinets have child-resistant caps? \_\_\_\_\_  
Products like furniture polishes, drain cleaners and some oven cleaners should have safety packaging to keep little children from accidentally opening the packages.

Are all potentially harmful products in their original containers? \_\_\_\_\_  
There are two dangers if products aren't stored in their original containers. Labels on the original containers often give first aid information if someone should swallow the product. And if products are stored in containers like drinking glasses or pop bottles, someone may think it is food and swallow it.

Are harmful products stored away from food? If harmful products are placed next to food, someone may accidentally get a food and a poison mixed up and swallow the poison. \_\_\_\_\_

Have all potentially harmful products been put up high and out of reach of children? The best way to prevent poisoning is making sure that it's impossible to find and get at the poisons. Locking all cabinets that hold dangerous products is the best poison prevention. \_\_\_\_\_

### THE BATHROOM

Yes    No

Did you ever stop to think that medicines could poison if used improperly? Many children are poisoned each year by overdoses of aspirin. If aspirin can poison, just think of how many other poisons might be in your medicine cabinet. \_\_\_\_\_

Do your aspirins and other potentially harmful products have \_\_\_\_\_

child-resistant closures? Aspirins and most prescription drugs come with child-resistant caps. Check to see yours have them, and that they are properly secured. Check your prescriptions before leaving the pharmacy to make sure the medicines are in child-resistant packaging. These caps have been shown to save the lives of children.

Have you thrown out all out-of-date prescriptions? As medicines get older, the chemicals inside them can change. So what was once a good medicine may now be a dangerous poison. Flush all old drugs down the toilet. Rinse the container well, then discard it. \_\_\_\_\_

Are all medicines in their original containers with the original labels? Prescription medicines may or may not list ingredients. The prescription number on the label will, however, allow rapid identification by the pharmacist of the ingredients should they not be listed. Without the original label and container, you can't be sure of what you're taking. After all, aspirin looks a lot like poisonous roach tablets. \_\_\_\_\_

If your vitamins or vitamin/mineral supplements contain iron, are they in child-resistant packaging? Most people think of vitamins and minerals as foods and, therefore, nontoxic, but a few iron pills can kill a child. \_\_\_\_\_

THE GARAGE OR STORAGE AREA	Yes	No
Did you know that many things in your garage or storage area that can be swallowed are terrible poisons? Death may occur when people swallow such everyday substances as charcoal lighter, paint thinner and remover, antifreeze and turpentine.	_____	_____
Do all these poisons have child-resistant caps? Are they stored in the containers?	_____	_____
Are the original labels on the containers?	_____	_____
Have you made sure that no poisons are stored in drinking glasses or pop bottles?	_____	_____
Are all these harmful products locked up and out of sight and reach?		

When all your answers are "Yes," then continue this level of poison protection by making sure that, whenever you buy potentially harmful products, they have child-resistant closures and are kept out of sight and reach. Post the number of the Poison Control Center near your telephone.

## Toy Safety Tips

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### WHEN BUYING TOYS

Choosing toys with care. Keep in mind the child's age, interests and skill level.

Look for quality design and construction in all toys for all ages.

Make sure that all directions or instructions are clear — to you, and, when appropriate, to the child. Plastic wrappings on toys should be discarded at once before they become deadly playthings.

Be a label reader. Look for and heed age recommendations, such as "Not recommended for children under three". Look for other safety labels including: "Flame retardant/Flame resistant" on fabric products and "Washable/hygienic materials" on stuffed toys and dolls.

### WHEN MAINTAINING TOYS

Check all toys periodically for breakage and potential hazards. A damaged or dangerous toy should be thrown away or repaired immediately.

Edges on wooden toys that might have become sharp or surfaces covered with splinters should be sanded smooth. When repainting toys and toy boxes, avoid using leftover paint, unless purchased recently, since older paints may contain more lead than new paint, which is regulated by CPSC. Examine all outdoor toys regularly for rust or weak parts that could become hazardous.

## WHEN STORING TOYS

Teach children to put their toys safely away on shelves or in a toy chest after playing to prevent trips and falls.

Toy boxes, too, should be checked for safety. Use a toy chest that has a lid that will stay open in any position to which it is raised, and will not fall unexpectedly on a child. For extra safety, be sure there are ventilation holes for fresh air. Watch for sharp edges that could cut and hinges that could pinch or squeeze. See

that toys used outdoors are stored after play  
— rain or dew can rust or damage a variety  
of toys and toy parts creating hazards.

## SHARP EDGES

New toys intended for children under eight  
years of age should, by regulation, be free of  
sharp glass and metal edges.

With use, however, older toys may break,  
exposing cutting edges.

## SMALL PARTS

Older toys can break to reveal parts small  
enough to be swallowed or to become lodged  
in a child's windpipe, ears or nose. The law  
bans small parts in new toys intended for  
children under three. This includes removable  
small eyes and noses on stuffed toys and  
dolls, and small, removable squeakers on  
squeeze toys. LOUD NOISES Toy caps and  
some noisemaking guns and other toys can  
produce sounds at noise levels that can  
damage hearing. The law requires the  
following label on boxes of caps producing  
noise above a certain level: "WARNING — Do

not fire closer than one foot to the ear. Do not use indoors." Caps producing noise that can injure a child's hearing are banned.

## CORDS AND STRINGS

Toys with long strings or cords may be dangerous for infants and very young children. The cords may become wrapped around an infant's neck, causing strangulation. Never hang toys with long strings, cords, loops, or ribbons in cribs or playpens where children can become entangled. Remove crib gyms for the crib when the child can pull up on hands and knees; some children have strangled when they fell across crib gyms stretched across the crib.

## SHARP POINTS

Toys which have been broken may have dangerous points or prongs. Stuffed toys may have wires inside the toy which could cut or stab if exposed. A CPSC regulation prohibits sharp points in new toys and other articles intended for use by children under eight years of age.



## PROPELLED OBJECTS

Projectiles -- guided missiles and similar flying toys -- can be turned into weapons and can injure eyes in particular. Children should never be permitted to play with adult lawn darts or other hobby or sporting equipment

that have sharp points. Arrows or darts used by children should have soft cork tips, rubber suction cups or other protective tips intended to prevent injury. Check to be sure the tips are secure. Avoid those dart guns or other toys which might be capable of firing articles not intended for use in the toy, such as pencils or nails.

## ALL TOYS ARE NOT FOR ALL CHILDREN

Keep toys designed for older children out of the hands of little ones. Follow labels that give age recommendations -- some toys are recommended for older children because they may be hazardous in the hands of a younger child. Teach older children to help keep their toys away from younger brothers and sisters.

Even balloons, when uninflated or broken, can choke or suffocate if young children try to

swallow them. More children have suffocated on uninflated balloons and pieces of broken balloons than on any other type of toy.

## ELECTRIC TOYS

Electric toys that are improperly constructed, wired or misused can shock or burn. Electric toys must meet mandatory requirements for maximum surface temperatures, electrical construction and prominent warning labels. Electric toys with heating elements are recommended only for children over eight years old. Children should be taught to use electric toys properly, cautiously and under adult supervision.

## INFANT TOYS

Infant toys, such as rattles, squeeze toys, and teethingers, should be large enough so that they cannot enter and become lodged in an infant's throat.

## Keeping Baby Safe: Your Most Important Role As A Parent

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Once your beautiful bundle of joy arrives, the work of raising your child really begins. The biggest job you have as a parent is keeping your baby safe. Yet, it is impossible to watch over your children twenty-four hours a day.

Thankfully, there are many safety products available to keep them from getting hurt. These products include safety gates, outlet covers, oven and table bumpers, doorknob covers, bed rails, locks and guards, and many more. As a parent, you need to use products that are one step ahead of their children's abilities, and can do so by getting down on their level and looking around. This gives you a child's eye perspective of child safety issues in your home.

But with so many products to buy and so many different brand names, how do you decide what products you need most? The best thing to do when it comes to safety is buy new products rather than used ones. An older,

used product may have been recalled due to dangerous safety issues, or it may be damaged from previous use. Although hand-me-downs are great for clothes and toys, your child's safety is just too important to leave to chance. Babies R Us is a great place to find all the safety products you need.

That still leaves the issue of how to choose between one safety gate, for instance, and another. Here are some purchasing tips for some of the more popular safety items you will need for your baby.

## Car Seats

More children are seriously injured and killed in auto accidents than in any other type of accident. Each year, hundreds of lives could be saved if children were protected in cars by using child safety seats. Using a child safety seat is the best protection you can give your child when traveling by car.

When purchasing a car seat, look for:

- Label states that it meets or exceeds the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards;

- Is the car seat appropriate for your child's height and weight?
- Be aware of the type of seat belts your car has; all car seats are not compatible with all seat belts;
- Check recent car seat recalls before making a purchase;
- Be sure that the seat you choose fits your child – a smaller baby can slip out of a seat that's too large. Infants one year or younger and up to 20 pounds must be placed in a rear-facing seat, toddlers (older than 1 year and between 20 and 40 pounds) may use a forward-facing seat, and children who are between 40 and 80 pounds need to be placed in a booster seat;
- Consider choosing a seat that is upholstered in fabric – it may be more comfortable for your child.

## Safety Gates

Baby safety gates are an essential element in

making your home baby proof. Now that he's on the move, every nook and cranny is a potential area of exploration for him. Your baby is curious about his new environment, wanting to investigate each little corner and new room. The best way to make sure he can't do any harm to himself is to install safety gates. These will prevent him from reaching the stairs, kitchen, or an office room, where there might be many wires and electrical equipment just at his height

Accordion gates, which open to form diamond-shaped patterns with wide V's at the top, can trap a baby's head and have resulted in strangulation deaths. In January 1985, gate manufacturers halted production of these gates, but there are still an estimated 15 million gates in use. Mesh gates also can be dangerous because a toddler's fingers can become trapped.

When purchasing a safety gate, look for the following:

- A hardware-mounted gate that attaches to the doorframe without any openings to trap fingers or necks. Pressure-mounted

gates should not be used between rooms of different levels or at the top of stairs; children can dislodge them and take a tumble.

- Gates that swing out should never be used at the top of stairways.

- Nonflexible vertical slats or rods should be no more than  $2 \frac{3}{8}$  inches apart.

- Check for sharp edges and protrusions that could hurt a toddler's hands.

- Avoid gates with structures that could give a child a foothold for climbing. Keep large toys away from the gate to prevent a child from using them to climb over.

- The gate should be no less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the child's height

## Playpens

These high-sided, enclosed play areas are popular because they allow parents to put their baby down with the knowledge that he can't wander off. It is great when you have to answer the phone, do a bit of ironing, or just

catch a quick breath!

When purchasing a playpen, look for the following:

- Holes in the mesh should be no larger than 1/4 inch to keep small fingers from getting caught;
- The sides should be at least 20 inches high, measured from the floor of the playpen;
- Look for padding on the tops of the rails to protect your baby from bumps.
- The locks that allow you to lower a side should be out of your baby's reach.

## Baby Monitors

The idea behind a baby monitor is that you can have the ability to move around the house or your yard and still be able to keep tabs on your baby by listening or now viewing your baby. This can help alert you to a crying baby, a baby who needs your help or just help you watch baby while he or she sleeps.



The baby/nursery monitor that you buy will have different levels of mobility. The base usually plugs into the wall, usually the nursery or wherever your baby is sleeping. The receiver can plug in or be mobile. If you intend to use the monitor as you move from room to room, you will want to invest in the mobile kind, versus the stationary variety.

When purchasing a baby monitor, look for the following:

- There should be at least two channels to choose from;
- Be sure that you have a low battery indicator light. Without this you might be listening to the receiver, thinking all is quiet in the baby's room, when in fact all you've got is a dead battery;
- Has a power-on light so that you can know the unit is on without disturbing the baby;
- Has a volume control to put you in charge of how loudly you wish to hear your baby;

- Are you planning to carry around your end of the monitoring system? Then you might want a belt clip!

## Bath Seats

A bath seat gives your child added support while in the bathtub and can help prevent a soapy baby from slipping out of your hands and hitting her head on the tub. Keep in mind, however, that you should NEVER leave your child unattended in the tub!

When purchasing a bath seat, look for the following:

- Never use a bath seat on textured or non-skid surfaces unless the manufacturer's instructions specifically state the seat is intended for such surfaces;
- Look for the JPMA Certification Seal.

Always remember, no matter what safety product you are buying, to look at the features to be sure they meet your specific requirements. Also check to be sure that the product you are considering has not recently been recalled. The safety of your child is of

utmost importance – don't leave it to chance!

## Tips for Homemade Baby Food

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Making your own baby food will ensure that what your child is eating is fresh, nutritious and free of additives. By making your own baby foods, you'll be saving money, up to 50%. And to top it off, it's easy; making baby food at home is probably a lot less time-consuming than you may have thought.

In order to make your own baby foods, you'll need something to cook in. A steamer basket is cheap and by cooking fruits and vegetables in it, you'll be sure of keeping the nutrients in the food, instead of in the cooking water.

To puree your foods, you can use a fork, a food mill or blender. A blender quickly purees almost anything into the finest consistency. When your baby first starts on solids, you'll be pureeing things to a very fine consistency and, as baby gets a little older, you will make foods a little coarser.

You may wish to buy a food mill which comes

in large and small sizes. It is very handy and inexpensive. The food mill strains most cooked foods to a very smooth consistency, although meats can be a problem as they will have a coarser texture.

As babies are susceptible to digestive upsets, you'll want to take note of the following tips concerning the handling of foods:

- always work with clean hands.
- always use clean utensils.
- prepare foods immediately upon removing them from the refrigerator.
- freeze immediately after cooking any foods you want to store.

You can prepare large amounts of foods at once and freeze them. Take your prepared foods and plop by spoonfuls onto a baking sheet. Freeze the plops right away and then take them off the sheet when they are frozen and put them into plastic bags. Label and date. You can also freeze the food in plastic "pop out" ice cube trays. Small tupperware jars with lids serve the same purpose and stack easily.

Frozen baby foods can be stored for up to two months.

When you take frozen foods out for baby, warm the food in a cup placed in a saucepan of boiling water with a lid on.

Cereals are typically the first foods given to a baby because they contain lots of iron. You can buy the commercial baby cereals, or prepare your own, by running oatmeal through your blender, for instance.

Fruits are generally given next. Except for raw, mashed banana, you will need to cook all other fruits till they are soft. Try making your own applesauce and pearsauce; don't add any sugar, as these fruits are sweet enough on their own. You can also peel peaches, plums and apricots and boil or steam them.

Use fresh vegetables whenever possible in order to provide the best nutrition and flavor for your baby. Frozen vegetables are better to use than canned. Steaming vegetables is the best method of preparation. Carrots and sweet potato are two popular choices to begin with.

Yogurt, mashed cottage cheese, mashed pumpkin, baked potato, avocado and tofu (oriental soy bean curd) are all popular with babies. One good idea is to blend together cottage cheese, banana and fresh orange juice – delicious!

Meats should be added slowly. They can be boiled or broiled, then put in the blender with a little milk and perhaps banana or cream of rice to get the right consistency. Chicken is generally the first meat baby is introduced to and usually goes down fairly well.

There is no rush to start your baby on solid foods. Milk is his most important food. Your doctor's recommendations and your own intuition will help you to know when to begin introducing solids to your baby's diet. Always remember to be patient with your baby and allow at least a few days between newly added foods to make sure baby doesn't suffer any reactions.

## Safe Bedding Practices For Infants

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Place baby on his/her back on a firm tight-fitting mattress in a crib that meets current safety standards.

Remove pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, pillow-like stuffed toys, and other soft products from the crib.

Consider using a sleeper or other sleep clothing as an alternative to blankets, with no other covering.

If using a blanket, put baby with feet at the foot of the crib. Tuck a thin blanket around the crib mattress, reaching only as far as the baby's chest.

Make sure your baby's head remains uncovered during sleep.

Do not place baby on a waterbed, sofa, soft mattress, pillow, or other soft surface to sleep.

## Great Veggies – For 10 months And Over

3 medium potatoes

8 ounces spinach

2 large cloves garlic

Peel and cube potatoes. Crush and peel garlic. Cook potatoes, spinach, and garlic with about 1/2 cup water for about 15 minutes over high heat, or until potatoes are soft.

Process all in a blender or food processor until very mushy. Freeze in ice cube trays overnight, then pop out cubes and store in another container in the freezer.

Yields 20 servings.

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## Chicken and Rice Dinner – 10 Months And Over

1/4 lb. ground chicken (you can use boneless breast cut in cubes if you are going to puree it)

1/2 cup peeled and chopped zucchini

1/2 cup sweet potato or yam, peeled and chopped

1/4 frozen, fresh, or canned corn

1/2 tsp. parsley

1 cup long grain, enriched rice

3 cups water Instructions:

Boil chicken in water for 2 minutes. Add remaining ingredients. Reduce heat, cover and simmer 30 minutes or until vegetables are soft. Mash or puree

## Chicken Stew – For 10 Months And Older

1 medium potato, peeled and chopped

1 cup of Water

¼ lb. ground chicken (you can use boneless breast cut in cubes if you are going to puree it)

1 carrot, peeled and chopped

½ cup yellow squash or summer squash  
peeled and chopped

¼ cup prepared barley (see instructions on the package for preparation) Instructions:

Bring chicken and water to a boil. Cook and stir for 2 minutes. Add vegetables. Cover, reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes. Add prepared barley. Mash or puree, depending on desired consistency.

## Tomato Pasta – For 10 Months Or Older

1 tbs margarine

1/4 cup cheddar or mild cheese, finely grated

1 large tomato, skinned, seeded chopped

1 teaspoon baby rice

1 tablespoon cottage cheese

1/2 cup Small Pasta Shapes

Cook the pasta according to directions on package.

Melt the margarine in a saucepan, add tomato and cook over a low heat for 2 minutes.

Remove the pan from the heat,

Add the cheeses and allow to melt into a sauce. Finally stir in the baby rice.

Pour the sauce over cooked pasta and serve.

Spinach Pasta For 10 Months And Over

1/2 cup spinach, trimmed

1/4 cup mild cheese (Cheddar, Jack, Gouda),  
grated

1/4 cup uncooked small-shaped pasta

2 tablespoons milk/formula

Boil the spinach in a little water for about 5 minutes until tender, at the same time, cook the pasta according to direction on the package.

Once the spinach is cooked press out all the excess water.

Combine with cheese, pasta and milk and blend to make into a puree or chop for older babies.

### Oatmeal Cookies – 11 Months Or Older

1 cup enriched all-purpose flour (you can use unbleached or cracked wheat flour for more nutrition)

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon\* (you should leave this out until your baby is 12 months old)

1/4 teaspoon salt

3/4 cup vegetable shortening

1 cup sugar (optional, you can substitute 1/2 cup juice and add an extra 1/2 cup of oatmeal)

1 large egg

2 or 3 bananas, mashed and very ripe (we recommend pureeing them to get ALL the lumps out)

2 1/4 cups infant oatmeal cereal (you can use regular rolled oats but you won't get the extra vitamins. When using rolled oats, use 1 3/4 cups oats and 1 1/2 cups flour)

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

2. Combine flour, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt in small bowl.

3. In a large bowl, cream the shortening and sugar (or juice with the oatmeal).

Beat in the egg and bananas. Gradually add the dry ingredients and mix well.

4. Drop dough by teaspoonfuls 1 ½ inches apart onto ungreased cookie sheet.

5. Bake for 12 minutes until lightly browned. Cool on rack.

### Peach Cobbler – 6 Months Or Older

3 canned peaches (6 halves) OR 3 ripe peaches

1 egg yolk (for babies 6 months to 10 months, omit egg yolk and thicken with infant cereal)

1 tsp sugar

1. Peel and dice the peaches into small

pieces.

2. Mash or puree to desired consistency.

3. Beat in the egg yolk and sugar until smooth. For babies age 6 months–10 months, omit egg and add infant cereal by 1 tablespoon, until you get the desired thickness.

4. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 min or until set. Cool before serving.

## TOFU FINGER CUBES

Slice tofu into small cubes

Toss tofu in a Ziploc bag with crushed Cheerios, crushed graham crackers or crushed granola

Close bag and toss to thoroughly coat tofu cubes – You can serve this as finger food or a protein boost during meals