

# Baby Safety

## Basic Hygiene

Help your family stay healthy by:

- ✓ **washing your hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds:
  - before feeding your baby
  - after using the bathroom
  - after diapering
  - after touching pets
  - after sneezing or coughing

Teach your older children to wash regularly, too.

- ✓ **washing high chairs, bibs and eating areas** after each use
- ✓ **cleaning cribs, strollers, changing tables and floors** with a mixture of 1 teaspoon of bleach in 2 cups (500 ml) of water

## General Safety

Improve your family's safety by:

- ✓ keeping emergency numbers by your home phone and in your cell phone
- ✓ learning basic first aid
- ✓ installing a fire extinguisher and smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, checking the batteries in the spring and the fall when you change the clocks and planning a fire escape route
- ✓ keeping your home smoke-free
- ✓ removing loose rugs, mini-blinds that may contain lead and dangling cords

- ✓ fastening bookcases and other furniture to the wall
- ✓ putting your baby down before having a hot drink or cooking
- ✓ setting your hot water heater below 49°C (120°F)
- ✓ keeping out of baby's reach:
  - all alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, medications and non-prescription opioids and stimulants
  - cleaners, chemicals and small objects like buttons and coins out of baby's reach

See *Toddler's First Steps* for more information on childproofing your home.



### DID YOU KNOW?

Your baby is most likely to get injured when you're distracted or tired, when they're tired or when you're not prepared for their next stage of development, like rolling over or crawling. Make babyproofing an ongoing process so you can keep up with each step of your child's growth.



### TRY THIS

Use extra care when carrying your baby. Don't try to carry other loads at the same time and keep a hand free to hold onto railings when taking the stairs.

## Baby Equipment



### BE AWARE

Before using any second-hand equipment, check for safety recalls at [recalls-rappels.canada.ca/en](https://recalls-rappels.canada.ca/en).

### Safer toys

Look for:

- soft
- non-toxic
- washable
- no small parts
- no batteries
- no plastic or vinyl in baby's mouth



### DID YOU KNOW?

Baby walkers are banned in Canada. They move too quickly and can cause head injuries. To learn more about consumer products visit: [canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/migration/hc-sc/cps-spc/alt\\_formats/pdf/pubs/cons/child-enfant/child-enfant\\_play-jeu-eng.pdf#page=21](https://canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/migration/hc-sc/cps-spc/alt_formats/pdf/pubs/cons/child-enfant/child-enfant_play-jeu-eng.pdf#page=21)

### Safer cribs

See *Sleep*.

## Safer playpens

Look for:

- fine mesh that you can't fit your little finger through
- no more than 2 wheels
- at least 48 cm (19 inches) high
- no rough or sharp edges or loose parts
- no hinges that can pinch or accidentally collapse
- no drilled holes between 3 and 10 mm (1/8 and 3/8 inch)
- no tears in rails or mattress pad
- no small parts for baby to choke on

Keep it safe by:

- not putting any scarves, necklaces, cords, heavy blankets, pillows or large toys in with your baby
- making sure all sides are fully raised and firmly fixed

## Safer strollers

Look for:

- 5-point harness
- easy-to-use good brakes
- secure wheels
- sun shade
- no sharp edges or loose folding parts
- suitable to your child's age, height and weight
- instructions and a label listing the manufacturer, model and date of manufacture

Keep it safe by:

- not putting your purse or heavy packages on the handle
- not using blankets or pillows as padding



### BE AWARE

Don't jog with your baby in a stroller until they're at least a year old and their neck muscles have strengthened. And always secure the 5-point harness.

## Safer baby carriers

### Slings and wraps

Look for:

- snug fit
- nothing covering baby's face or head
- no rips or tears

### Front carriers

Look for:

- firm, padded head support
- leg holes your baby can't slip through
- right size for your baby (check the weight requirement)

Keep them safe by:

- keeping your baby secure and upright
- keeping your baby's face uncovered and in view at all times
- keeping your baby's head close enough for you to kiss
- checking on your baby often to monitor their breathing and check for overheating
- making sure your baby's chin isn't resting on their chest
- being careful when putting your baby in and taking them out
- holding onto your baby when bending over
- making sure your baby's back is supported

- making sure your baby's legs aren't bunched up against their stomach
- not zipping your coat up over your baby
- being extra careful if your baby is 4 months or younger and talking with your health care provider before using if your baby was premature



### BE AWARE

Don't use a carrier, sling or wrap while skiing, jogging, biking, cooking or doing any other activity that could harm your baby.

## Back carriers

Look for:

- wide, solid base

Keep it safe by:

- using it only once your baby can sit up by themselves
- not using it as a car seat
- never placing it on a table or counter with your baby in it
- always doing up the straps and restraining buckles
- not doing up your coat around the carrier

## Safer soothers

Look for:

- one-piece design
- firmly attached nipple
- no cord (use a clip with a short ribbon instead – but only when baby isn't sleeping)
- no toy or stuffed animal attached

Keep it safe by:

- boiling it in water for 5 minutes, then cooling it completely before the first use
- cleaning it regularly in warm, soapy water
- replacing it every 2 months, or sooner if it's sticky, cracked or torn



### DANGER

Don't let your baby chew on a soother for teething. It can break and cause them to choke.



### DID YOU KNOW?

Cleaning a soother in your own mouth or dipping it in honey or syrup can lead to tooth decay for your child.

## Safer car seats

Look for:

- CMVSS label
- at least 2 sets of slots for shoulder harness straps

Visit [bcaa.com/community/community-programs/child-passenger-safety](http://bcaa.com/community/community-programs/child-passenger-safety) for more information.

### Choose the proper seat:

#### Infant vs. convertible car seat:

You can use an infant seat from birth until your baby reaches the seat's weight limit. Then switch to a convertible car seat. Or you can start with a convertible seat and adjust it as your baby grows.

#### Rear-facing vs. front-facing:

A rear-facing seat is the safest for your baby and must be used until they're at least 1 year old **and** weigh at least 10 kg (22 lb). Continue to keep your child facing the back of the car for as long as possible – even if they have to fold their legs a bit. Once they reach the rear-facing weight or height limit of the seat, it's time to either find another model that they can use rear-facing, or switch their current seat to face the front of the car.



### DANGER

Never leave your baby in their car seat on a table, counter or anywhere else they could fall from.

Never place a rear-facing seat in a seat that has an air bag.

Never leave a baby alone in a car, even for a few minutes.

#### New vs. used:

Second-hand seats aren't recommended. And don't use seats that have been in a car crash or are past their expiry date. The plastic may be damaged or weakened, or the safety standards may have changed. If you do use a used seat, inspect it carefully, check for any recalls, and visit Health Canada's second-hand car seat safety page: [canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/road-safety/second-hand-car-seats.html](http://canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/road-safety/second-hand-car-seats.html)





### HOW TO Put your baby in the car seat

1. Fasten the harness snugly so that only 1 finger fits between it and your baby's collarbone.
2. Raise the chest clip to your baby's underarms.
3. Ensure the harness straps are at your baby's shoulders or slightly below. Raise the harness straps when their shoulders are level with the next highest slot.
4. For support, only use items that came with your car seat. Don't use unrelated head huggers, rolled towels or blankets.
5. Dress your baby in clothes that have sleeves and legs and aren't too heavy. Don't use a coat.
6. If your baby needs a blanket, put it on after they're strapped in.



### HOW TO Install a car seat

1. Place it rear facing in the back seat following the manufacturer's instructions.
2. Lower the carrying handle behind an infant seat.
3. Tilt a child seat back a maximum of 45°. If your baby's head falls forward, the seat needs to be tilted back more.
4. Secure the seat with its universal anchorage system or with the car's seat belt. Check your car's owner's manual to see if you need to use a locking clip.

