

# *Keeping your baby safe*



*Safety information for parents  
and carers of babies - 0 to 1 year*



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# Introduction

Your baby depends on you to keep them safe. Your baby cannot control her or his surroundings. As your baby grows they are able to get themselves into situations that may be dangerous.



The information in this booklet is designed to help you to keep your baby safe as they grow. It looks at the first year of your baby’s life and gives helpful tips for keeping your baby safe.

Basic first aid information is also included.

# Safety as your baby grows

Each baby will grow and learn at their own pace. Often your baby will surprise you with what they can do. As your baby grows so to does their ability to get into dangerous situations that may result in injuries. Knowing what to expect can help you stay one step ahead.



## By 3 months, your baby may be able to:

- roll over when placed on their back and tummy; and
- reach for and grasp things.

## By 6 months, your baby may be able to:

- sit up without help;
- roll greater distances to get things;
- use their hands to pull and push things; and
- start crawling.

## By 8 months, your baby may be able to:

- crawl on their hands and knees or shuffle on their bottom;
- pull themselves up and climb on furniture.
- use their hands to open and shut, or fill and empty things; and
- chew on anything.

## By 1 year, your baby may be able to:

- stand without help;
- walk with or without help; and
- realise that things are still there even when they are put out of sight.

You know your baby best, so use the age ranges here as a guide only.

# Tips to help keep your baby safe

The following information and safety tips will help you keep your baby safe.

## Reduce the risk of cot death

Cot death is the sudden and unexpected death of a baby or young child who appeared to be quite healthy. Most cot deaths happen during the first year of life, mainly between the ages of 1 and 5 months.

Because we do not know exactly why cot deaths happen, there is no sure way of stopping it. But there are a number of things you can do to reduce the chances of it happening to your baby.

### Create a smoke free zone for your baby

- Do not smoke anywhere near your baby. Even better, do not smoke at all.



- Ask visitors not to smoke. It is best if no one smokes in the house.

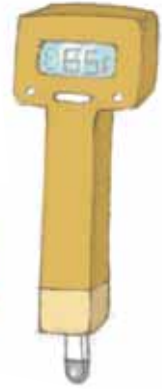
### Put your baby to sleep on his or her back

Lay your baby to sleep on their back, near the foot of the cot, and with the blankets below their shoulders.

## Temperature

Do not allow your baby to get too warm. When going to sleep your baby only needs a nappy, vest and babygro. In hot weather they will need even less clothes.

To see how warm your baby is feel their tummy. Your baby's tummy should feel warm not hot. 65°F (18°C) is the ideal room temperature for your baby.

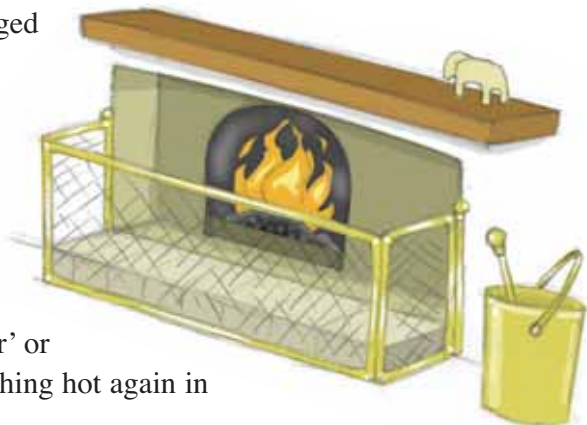


## Breastfeed your baby

Breastfeeding on its own does not reduce the risk of cot death. But breastfeeding, even for the first few weeks, does reduce your baby's chances of getting an infection.

## Burns and scalds

Your baby has very thin and delicate skin that is damaged easily. Your baby is not able to move away from heat if it feels too hot. At this stage, your baby will not learn from the experience of touching something hot. Do not expect them to 'remember' or 'learn' not to touch something hot again in the future.



## Here are some safety tips to help prevent injuries.

### In the home

- try not to heat bottles in the microwave. If you do, shake the bottle well afterwards and leave it to stand for one minute before giving it to your baby.
- keep kettle leads short or use a coiled lead, to stop the lead dangling over the work surface.
- when running a bath put the cold water in first, and then add the hot water. Always check the temperature before putting your baby in the bath.
- always guard open fires, electric and gas fires and heaters; solid fuel, oil or gas fired stoves with a fireguard.
- keep hot drinks well out of your baby's reach. Liquid can be hot enough to burn a baby up to half an hour after boiling.



### In the sun

- keep your baby out of the sun at all times.
- when the weather is warm, dress your baby in close-knit cotton clothing and hats that shade their face and back of their neck.



## Fires in the home

There are some general fire safety rules that everyone should follow.

- Fit a smoke alarm and check that it is working every month.
- Always use a fireguard with open or electric fires and heaters, solid fuel, oil and gas stoves.
- Put out cigarettes and matches completely.
- Keep matches and cigarettes out of the reach of children.
- Close interior doors to prevent fire spreading.
- Do not overload electric sockets. Replace old worn leads.
- Work out your family escape plan and practise it now.

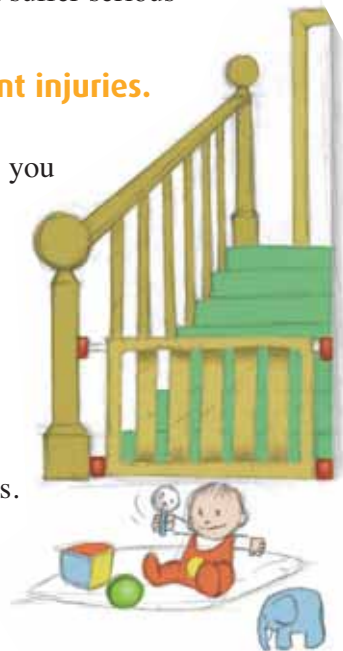


## Falls

Even the youngest baby can wiggle their way to the edge of a bed or changing table on their own. Your baby can suffer serious injuries from falls, even from small heights.

**Here are some safety tips to help prevent injuries.**

- nappy changing is safest done on the floor.  
If you use a changing table, have everything you need nearby. Always keep one hand on your baby.
- always use a five-point harness when your baby is sitting in a high chair or buggy.
- once your baby starts to move keep the cot drop side in the 'up' position.
- keep stairs free of clutter.
- fit safety gates at the top and bottom of stairs.  
keep them closed when not in use.
- baby carry seats and bouncing chairs should always be placed on the floor.



## Babywalkers

Babywalkers allow your baby to move very quickly and reach things they could not before. Your baby has a higher risk of injury from falls or burns when using a babywalker.

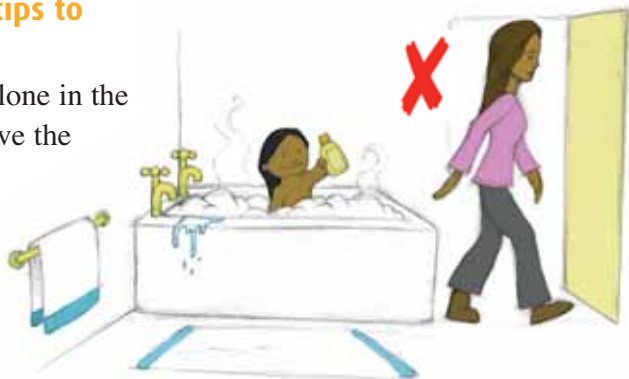
Our advice is not to use one.

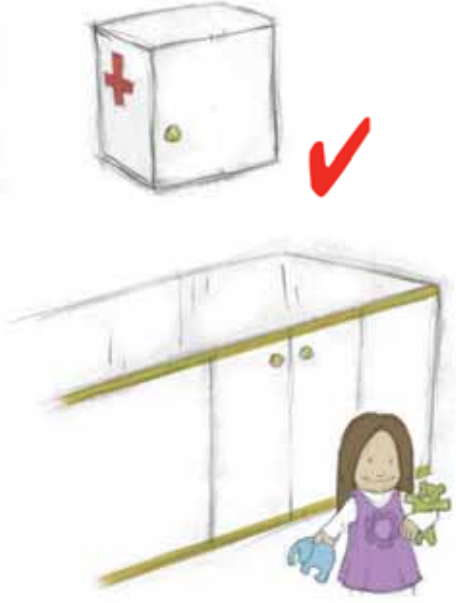
## Drowning

Watch your baby at all times when they are in or near water of any kind. A baby can drown in just a few centimetres of water.

### Here are some safety tips to help prevent injuries.

- never leave your baby alone in the bath. If you have to leave the room take your baby with you.
- do not leave toddlers or older children to mind your baby in the bath or near water.
- always empty paddling pools, buckets and watering cans immediately after use.





## Poisoning

Your baby will put things into their mouth, even if it tastes or smells unpleasant.

**Here are some safety tips to help prevent injuries.**

- keep all medicines, chemicals and creams out of your baby's reach.
- keep chemicals and household cleaners in the containers you bought them in to avoid confusion.
- check the garden for poisonous plants.

## Suffocation

Clothes, bedclothes or other material that they cannot push away can suffocate a young baby.

As your baby begins to move and explore, anything they come across will be seen as a toy. Plastic bags are very dangerous for babies and young children.

### Here are some safety tips to help prevent injuries.

- do not use duvets or pillows for babies under the age of 1 year.
- put your baby down to sleep on his/her back.
- do not sleep with or hold your baby if you have taken alcohol or drugs of any kind.
- keep plastic bags out of reach and tie a knot in them.
- be watchful of toddlers and young children around your baby.
- keep pets away from your baby.

## Choking

The most common causes of choking are food, drink and small objects like marbles or small toys.

### Here are some safety tips to help prevent injuries.

- always stay with your baby when they are feeding from a bottle, eating or drinking.
- keep small objects and toys out of your baby's reach.
- do not give your baby peanuts or boiled sweets.
- teach young children not to put anything into your baby's mouth.

## Strangulation

Anything placed around the neck of your baby may be dangerous.

### Here are some tips to help prevent injuries.

- never put necklaces or dummies on ribbons or thread around your baby's neck.
- always make sure your baby's clothing is not too tight around their neck.
- trim ribbons on clothing as short as possible.
- keep all blind cords and other similar items out of reach or trimmed short.



## Cuts and bruises

While a young baby can hold on quite tight when a toy is put directly into their fist, they cannot control its movement. There will be times when your baby will hit themselves with it. Once the toy is light and soft no damage will be done.

### Here are some tips to help prevent injuries.

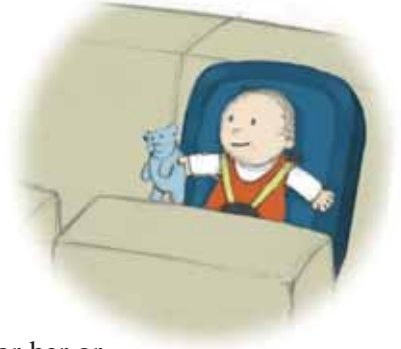
- Only give your baby toys to play with that are suitable for their age.
- Move dangerous objects, such as knives and scissors, out of reach.
- Watch what older children are giving your baby to hold.

# Safety when out and about

## In the car

The safest place for your baby to travel in a car is in a baby car seat, in the back seat of your car.

Use a rear (back) facing baby seat from birth. When your baby reaches 10kg (22lb) weight or her or his head reaches the top of the seat, change to a forward (front) facing baby seat.



## Here are some safety tips to help prevent injuries.

### In the car

- Always use a correctly fitting baby seat when travelling in a car.
- Never put a rear facing baby seat in a passenger seat with an airbag fitted.

### On foot

- Check old or second-hand prams or buggies for damage before using.
- Always use a five-point harness to strap your baby into the pram or buggy.
- When using a baby sling, always adjust and secure the sling's straps correctly.
- When using a baby sling or carrying your baby, take care not to trip when using stairs or walking over uneven ground.



# First Aid

## Have a first aid kit in your home

Your kit should contain

- Scissors
- Bandages
- Band Aids
- Absorbent pad
- Tape
- Antiseptic wipes



**Do you know First Aid?**

For details of classes in your area contact:

Order of Malta            01 668 4891

St. Johns Ambulance   01 668 8077

Irish Red Cross         01 860 3819

# Basic First Aid

## Stay calm and act quickly

### Burns and scalds

#### 1. Cool it

Immediately run cold water over the burn for at least 10 minutes.

#### 2. Clean it

Use cold running water. Remove tight clothing as burnt skin can swell.

#### 3. Cover it

Cover the burn with a clean non-fluffy cloth.

Take your baby to the hospital.

### Choking and suffocation

#### 1. Remove any obvious obstruction from your baby's mouth or face.

#### 2. Can your baby breathe?

if yes, take your baby to the hospital at once.

#### 3. If unable to breathe dial 999 or 112.

#### 4. Stay on the line and listen carefully to the advice.



# Cuts

## 1. Clean it

Use cold running water.

## 2. Cover it

Cover small cuts and grazes with a plaster.

For heavy bleeding put pressure on the cut using an absorbent pad or clean folded cloth until it stops bleeding. If there is something inside the cut, like glass, put pressure on the skin beside the cut.

## 3. Raise it

Hold up a bleeding arm or leg, as long as you do not think it is broken.

**If the cut is very deep or  
has something in it, take your  
baby to your family doctor.**

# Poisons

## 1. Find the poison

Find out what your baby has taken. If pills are missing, quickly check if they have fallen on the floor or under furniture.

## 2. Call your family doctor or hospital for advice

## 3 Give them small sips of water or milk

Do not try to make your baby sick.

## 4. Take your baby to your family doctor or hospital

If possible take the container and a sample of whatever you think has been swallowed.







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Child Accident Prevention Trust (2000) **Accidents and child development**  
National Safety Council (2000) **Be Safe**  
Health Promotion Unit (1997) **Play it Safe**