



Safety tips for new parents

Congratulations on the birth of your baby! At Beth Israel Deaconess, we want to do everything we can to keep your new baby safe and healthy. This fact sheet tells you about important safety practices that we follow in the hospital, and also gives some tips on keeping your baby safe once you go home. If you have any questions or concerns about your baby's safety, please ask.

In the hospital

- If a staff member is taking your baby out of your room, he or she **must have a hospital ID badge with a blue background**. If the person does not have a Beth Israel Deaconess ID badge with a blue band behind the name, do not allow the person to take your baby.
- If your baby has been away from you, the staff will check the baby's ID bands with you before you and your baby are reunited.
- To prevent accidents, we do not allow anyone to carry a baby in the hallway. This includes the parents and other family members. If you are taking your baby down the hall, please wheel him or her in the crib.
- **Please do not take your baby off of the unit until it is time for you to go home.**
- **Never** leave your baby alone in the room. If you need to leave your room, bring your baby with you or bring him/her to the nursery.
- If you are showering, bring the crib to the bathroom door or near the door, and position it so that you can watch the baby. Or, if you prefer, bring the baby to the nursery while you shower.
- **Never** leave the baby alone on the bed.
- If you are adjusting your bed, please make sure the baby's crib isn't too close to the bed. The crib can get caught in the bed as it moves, which could cause the baby to fall.
- **Always** place your baby on his or her back to sleep. This has been shown to reduce the chance of sudden infant death syndrome, or SIDS.
- It's important for babies to be held and cuddled a lot in the first weeks and months of life. We encourage you to hold your baby often, especially skin-to-skin, while you are on the postpartum unit. It is fine to have your baby in bed with you while you are awake. But please **do not have the baby in your bed if you are feeling tired or sick**. Your baby could fall or be injured. Ask your nurse for help in these situations. Always place your baby back in the crib if you are going to sleep. *Over →*

After you go home

- Never leave your baby alone on a raised surface. Even babies who cannot yet roll over can fall if left alone.
- Always put your baby to sleep on his or her back. Use a firm surface with no pillow. Make sure there are no loose blankets or stuffed animals in the crib or near the baby's face.
- If a visiting nurse will be coming to check on you after you go home, ask to see the nurse's identification.
- Birth announcements are a wonderful, safe way to announce your new arrival to family and friends. The Center for Missing and Exploited Children recommends that you do not put balloons and banners outside your home or notices about the new baby in the newspaper.
- When you are outside your home, never leave your baby alone, even for a few seconds. Although it is tempting to dash into a store while your baby sleeps peacefully in the car, tragic accidents have occurred during these brief moments. Always take your baby with you.
- When traveling by car, always use a car seat. If you are traveling in someone else's car or in a cab, you must take your car seat with you. Again, tragic accidents have occurred during "short rides" in which babies were not properly restrained.
- Make sure you have working smoke detectors on every floor of your home and at least one carbon monoxide detector near sleeping areas. Replace batteries twice a year. (A good way to remember is to replace the batteries when the clocks change in the spring and fall.)
- Never leave siblings or pets alone with the baby.
- You will be given important information about the dangers of "shaking" your baby, which can cause brain damage or death. Please be sure to ask for this information if you don't find it in the materials you have received.

We know you will enjoy the special months and years to come with your baby. By following these tips, you help ensure that your baby will stay safe, healthy, and happy. If you have any concerns, please speak to one of our staff or to your baby's health care provider.

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