

Baby Safety

Basic Hygiene

Help your family stay healthy by:

- ✓ **washing your hands** with soap and water for at least 15 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 1 litre 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 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 he's tired, or when you're not prepared for his 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 canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/consumer-product-safety.

Safer toys

Look for:

- soft
- non-toxic
- washable
- no small parts
- 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. Try an activity centre instead.

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
- good brakes
- secure wheels
- no sharp edges or loose folding parts

Keep it safe by:

- not putting your purse or heavy packages on the handle



BE AWARE

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

Safer baby carriers

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)

Back carriers

Look for:

- wide, solid base

Keep it safe by:

- using it only once your baby can sit up by himself
- 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

Slings and wraps

Look for:

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

Keep it safe by:

- keeping your baby's face uncovered ("visible and kissable")
- checking him often
- making sure his chin isn't pressed into his chest
- being careful when putting him in and taking him out
- holding onto him when bending over
- not zipping your coat up over him
- being extra careful if he's 4 months or younger, and talking with your health care provider before using if he 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.

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
- replacing or boiling it for 5 to 10 minutes each day if your baby has thrush



DANGER

Don't let your baby chew on a soother for teething. It can break and cause him 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/child-car-seat-safety for more information.



Choose the proper seat:

Infant vs. child seat:

Use an infant seat from birth until your baby reaches the seat's weight limit. Then switch to a convertible child seat.

Rear-facing vs. front-facing:

A rear-facing seat is the safest for your baby, and must be used until he's at least 1 year old **and** weighs at least 10 kg (22 lb). Continue to keep your child facing the back of the car for as long as possible – even if he has to fold his legs a bit. Once he reaches the rear-facing weight limit of the seat or his head is within 2½ cm (1 inch) of the top of the seat, it's time to either find another model that he can use rear-facing, or switch his current seat to face the front of the car.

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 one, inspect it carefully and check for any recalls.



DANGER

Never leave your baby in his car seat on a table, counter or anywhere else he 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.



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 his shoulders or slightly below. Raise the harness straps when his 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 him in clothes that have sleeves and legs and aren't too heavy.
6. If he needs a blanket, put it on after he's 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.