

Safe Home

When you bring your baby home

We know you want your baby to be safe. This handout gives tips to help make sure your home is safe for your baby,

Your Baby's Security

- Only let people you know well into your home.
- If there is someone you don't know who needs to come to your house, such as a repair person or public health nurse:
 - Make sure you know the name of the agency and the person who is coming. When they arrive, ask to see their agency ID.
 - If you are at all unsure, call the agency or company to make sure they did send someone. Ask for the name of the person and what kind of ID they should have.



In the NICU, we do many things to keep your baby safe. When you take your baby home, be very cautious about who you let into your house.

- Only leave your baby with people you know well.
- If you put a birth notice in the newspaper, do not include your address.
- It is not safe to use outdoor decorations to announce your baby's arrival.

Basic Safety

- Do not leave your baby alone on a bed, sofa, or any raised surface that they could fall from.
- Never put the car seat on a high or unstable surface.
- Store all medicines and vitamins out of reach of infants and children.
- Close medicine caps tightly after use.

- Avoid using cleaning products that contain harsh chemicals.
- It is unsafe to attach a pacifier to a string or chain.
- Keep your baby strapped in when using swings, strollers, or high chairs.
- Make sure toys do not have small parts or other pieces your baby could choke on.
- Remind smokers not to smoke around your baby. Chemicals from smoke stay on clothing and can harm your baby.
- Always supervise pets when they are near your baby.

Your Baby's Crib

- Your baby should sleep in a crib, bassinet, or baby playard (“Pack ‘n Play”). Your baby should not sleep in a bed with anyone else. (See the handout “Safe Sleep” for more details.)
- If you are buying a crib, follow the assembly instructions and make sure every part is installed correctly. If you are buying or using a used crib, make sure that the mattress fits tightly, the hardware is intact, and nothing is broken or damaged.
- Make sure there are no gaps between the sides of the crib and the mattress.
- The distance between crib slats **must** be less than 2³/₈ inches. (A soda can should not be able to fit between the slats.)
- Avoid using bumper pads in the crib. Tests show that they are not safe.
- Crib sheets should be tight-fitting and not get loose when your baby moves.
- Make sure the sides of your crib are raised when your baby is inside.
- Make sure your crib does not have any cracked or peeling paint your baby could swallow.
- Keep the crib away from windows. Keep drapery, blind cords, and baby monitor cords out of your baby's reach, both from the crib and from the changing table.

Air Safety

- Put a carbon monoxide detector on each floor of your house, near the bedrooms.
- The fumes from car exhaust are toxic, so make sure that you do not leave your car running while it is in the garage or other enclosed area.

Your Baby's Bathtub

- Always keep an eye on your baby when they are in the bath or other water. It is not safe to use bathtub plastic rings, pool noodles, floaties, or other air-filled toys to keep your baby above water.
- See the handout “Basic Baby Care” for tips on giving a bath safely.
- Set your home water heater to no more than 120°F (48.8°C) to reduce the risk of scalding.

Your Kitchen

- Always put your baby where they are safe and protected before you do activities like cooking, drinking hot liquids, or eating hot food. It is not safe to hold your baby during these times.
- Keep hot items and sharp objects out of your baby's reach.
- Small magnets on the refrigerator are choking hazards. Avoid using them when there is a baby in the house.
- Make sure electrical cords are always well out of your baby's reach.
- Microwaves can heat milk unevenly, so use other ways to warm your baby's milk. You might place the bottle in a pot of warm tap water, or use a bottle warmer.

Fire Safety

- There should be a smoke alarm on every floor of the house, and one inside or near your baby's room. Test your alarms every month and replace their batteries once a year.
- Create a fire escape plan and practice it. If a door is blocked or on fire, is there another way out? Do you need a window ladder? Who will get the baby? Where do you meet outside?
- Make sure that your electrical outlets are not overloaded and that power cords are not under rugs.
- Keep space heaters away from anything that can catch on fire.
- Make sure to use your oven for cooking purposes only, not to heat your home.
- Grills, generators, and camp stoves are for outdoor use only. They are not safe to use indoors.
- Blow out candles before you leave the room.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in your kitchen, and know how to use it.

- Post emergency numbers near your house phone, and program them into your cell phone.
- In case of a fire, take your baby to a neighbor's house and call 911.

Babysitters

- When you leave your baby with a babysitter, make sure the sitter knows how to reach you. Put a list of emergency phone numbers near the phone and show them to the sitter. Include:
 - Your cell phone number(s)
 - An emergency contact name and phone number if the babysitter cannot reach you
 - Emergency 911
 - Poison Control center number: 800.222.1222
 - Your baby's full name
 - Your full name
 - Your baby's primary care provider and phone number
 - Your baby's birth date
 - Your baby's health insurance information
 - Which hospital to go to if there is an emergency
 - Your written consent for your baby's emergency medical treatment if you are away overnight

References: NANN's Discharge Module: *"Baby's Steps to Home: A Guide to Prepare NICU Parents for Home"*

Questions?

Your questions are important. Talk with a member of your baby's healthcare team if you have questions or concerns.

Neonatal Intensive Care Unit:
206.598.4606