

Strangulation

Young babies can easily get ribbons or cords caught around their neck and become unable to free themselves.

- ✎ don't tie a dummy to your baby's clothes as the tie or ribbon could strangle your baby
- ✎ make sure any cot toys you buy have very short ribbons and remove them when your baby goes to sleep
- ✎ never hang things like bags with cords or strings over your baby's cot
- ✎ cut or tie-up curtain or blind cords well out of your baby's reach.

Drowning

Babies can drown in as little as 5cm (2") of water and drowning is silent – you won't necessarily hear any noise or struggle.

- ✎ stay with your baby all the time they are in the bath – never leave them even for a moment, even if there is an older brother or sister in the bath with them
- ✎ if you use a bath seat remember that it's not a safety device and you will still need to stay with your baby all the time.

Poisoning

Babies from about age six months onwards begin to put things in their mouths.

- ✎ keep all medicines locked away or high up out of reach and sight
- ✎ keep cleaning products high up out of reach or, if necessary, fit safety catches to low cupboard doors where they are kept. Try to choose cleaning products that contain a bittering agent. It helps to prevent children swallowing the contents as it makes them taste nasty
- ✎ make sure bottle tops and lids are always firmly closed when not in use
- ✎ fit carbon monoxide alarms wherever there is a flame-burning appliance (such as a gas boiler) or open fire. Carbon monoxide is poisonous. You can't see it, smell it or taste it. Also, make sure that your appliances are serviced regularly and that ventilation outlets in your home are not blocked.



Out and about

By law, babies must always be put in proper baby car seats when travelling in the car – even on short, local journeys.

- ✎ always use a car seat that is right for your baby's age, height and weight
- ✎ make sure the seat is fitted properly in the car and your baby is securely strapped in the seat
- ✎ never use a rear-facing car seat in the front seat where there is a passenger airbag – it could harm your baby if it activates in a crash.

We strongly advise parents and carers to learn first aid.

For further information on first aid and first aid courses contact

British Red Cross www.redcross.org.uk

St John Ambulance www.sja.org.uk

St Andrew's www.firetalk.org.uk

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babies
top safety tips
for parents and carers

Every day lots of babies are rushed to hospital because they've been hurt in accidents. Most of the accidents happen at home because that's where babies spend most of their time.

Find out how you can keep your baby out of danger.



Burns and scalds

A baby's skin is much thinner than an adult's and will burn or scald much more easily. This means taking extra care at bath time and remembering that babies will reach out for things like hot drinks.

- ✎ test the bath water with your elbow before putting your baby into the water – it should not feel either hot or cold. We advise that you have a thermostatic mixing valve fitted to your bath hot tap to control the temperature of the water that comes out of it, to stop your child being badly scalded
- ✎ when warming milk, shake the bottle well and test the temperature of the milk by placing a few drops on the inside of your wrist before feeding. It should feel luke warm not hot
- ✎ keep things like hot kettles, toasters, saucepans and the oven door itself out of your baby's reach
- ✎ don't hold your baby and a hot drink at the same time – a wriggly baby can cause you to spill drink on them
- ✎ don't leave hot drinks in easy reach of little hands – babies are likely to grab at cups or mugs and pull the contents over themselves
- ✎ fit fireguards to all fires and heaters and use a sparkguard too if you have a coal or wood fire.

Falls

Babies learn something new every day. They soon learn to wriggle and kick, and it's not long before they learn to roll over which means they can roll off things. Once they learn to crawl, some babies may try to climb on things, also putting them at risk of falling.

- ✎ change your baby's nappy on the floor
- ✎ don't leave your baby alone on a bed, sofa or changing table – even for a second – as they could roll off
- ✎ don't put your baby in a bouncing cradle up on a table or kitchen work top – wriggling could tip it over the edge. Only use it on the floor
- ✎ from when your baby starts to crawl, fit safety gates to stop them climbing stairs or falling down them
- ✎ make sure low furniture is kept away from windows and that windows are fitted with locks or safety catches to stop your child falling out. However, make sure adults know where keys are kept in case of fire
- ✎ use a five point harness to secure your baby in a highchair or when out in a pushchair
- ✎ only use baby walkers that comply with BS EN 1273: 2005. Baby walkers with older BS standards are less safe
- ✎ hold the hand rail while carrying your baby up or down stairs in case you trip
- ✎ watch where you're putting your feet while carrying your baby around the house – it's easy to trip over something like a child's toy.



House fires

If your home catches fire you and your baby could breathe in the poisonous smoke. It's especially dangerous if the fire breaks out during the night while you're all asleep.

- ✎ fit smoke alarms on every level of your home
- ✎ test the batteries every week
- ✎ change the batteries every year, or get ones that have ten year batteries are wired to the mains or that plug into light sockets
- ✎ make sure you always put cigarettes right out
- ✎ at night, switch off electrical items wherever possible before going to bed and close all doors to contain any fire
- ✎ practise how you will escape from your home if there's a fire, so you know what to do if the alarm goes off.

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Choking and suffocation

Young babies can easily choke – even on their milk. And once they get a little bigger, they like to put things in their mouths – it's part of how they learn about the world around them. Remember, when they are very little they can also suffocate more easily.

- ✎ if you give your baby a bottle, always hold the bottle and your baby while they are feeding
- ✎ keep small things like buttons, coins or small parts from toys out of reach
- ✎ cut all your baby's food up small – babies can choke on something as small as a grape
- ✎ always put your baby to sleep on his or her back and in the feet-to-foot position (with your baby's toes close to the end of the cot to prevent wriggling down under the covers)
- ✎ don't use pillows or duvets with babies under a year old as they can suffocate if their face gets smothered.