

# Getting Ready for Baby



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## Introduction

This section is unique. It covers topics that you might want to think about throughout your pregnancy. The more prepared you are today, the easier your transition will be to being a parent.



## Becoming a Parent

For most people, the idea of becoming a parent can be both exciting and scary. It is okay to feel overwhelmed. Having a baby is a big change. This is true even if this is not your first baby.


Parenting is one of the most important jobs you will ever do. It is also the longest. Regardless of your child's age, once you are a parent, you will always be a parent.

### Will you “just know” how to be a parent?

Many people feel that you should just know how to be a parent. However, you are not born with parenting skills. These skills are something that you learn. Sometimes you learn from your parents or friends. Sometimes you learn through experience. A lot of parents turn to programs, books, and the internet for information.

### Can you be a “perfect” parent?

You do not have to be a perfect parent. In fact, no parent is perfect. You will be learning how to be a parent as you parent. With each child, you will learn different skills. Sometimes you will make mistakes. Sometimes you will feel fear, frustration, and anger. This is normal and does not make you a bad parent. Make plans now so you are prepared to deal with these emotions. Remember to take time for yourself and get support if you need it.

A pink heart graphic with a quote by Sue Atkins. The heart is filled with a soft pink color and has a slightly textured appearance. The quote is written in a black, serif font. The background behind the heart is a light blue and white bokeh pattern.

There is no such thing as a  
perfect parent  
so just be a  
real one.

~ Sue Atkins

### **Can you connect to your baby when you are pregnant?**

Take the time while you are pregnant to get used to the idea that you will be a parent. You can connect to your baby when you are pregnant by talking and singing to your baby. You can rub your stomach and do other things to help you feel connected.

### **Are you co-parenting?**

If you are in a relationship, talk to your partner about becoming a parent. What are you excited about? What are you scared about? Ask your partner about their excitement and fears as well.

Talk about how you want to raise your baby. Who will get up at night when the baby cries? What does discipline mean to both of you? What traditions would you like to bring into your parenting? Your partner will play an important role in your baby's life.

If you are not with your baby's father but he will still be in the baby's life, now is the time to try to sort out some of the details. If possible, it is important to have the other parent in your baby's life. However, if this is stressful for you or if the relationship is abusive, it is okay for you to stay away. You can get support from family and friends. They can play important roles in your child's life.



## Car Seats

### Will you need a car seat?

It is important to plan ahead to safely travel with your baby. You will need a car seat to leave the hospital with your baby.

Your baby must always be in the back seat of the vehicle. A newborn's car seat should face the back of the vehicle.

Not all car seats work well in all vehicles. Before you buy one, be sure it fits in your vehicle.

Be sure to fill out a car seat warranty form. This can be done online. If there is a recall or problem with your car seat, the manufacturer will contact you.



## Are you thinking about buying or using a used car seat?

If you are thinking of buying a used car seat, find the answers to the questions below before you buy. It may not be worth the risk to your baby's safety.

- Has the car seat been in a crash?
- Is the car seat past its expiry date? This can be found on the plastic of the seat.
- Are the straps frayed or torn?
- Are there cracks in the plastic?
- Is the seat's manual missing?
- Are there missing parts?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, you should not buy or use the car seat.

## Why do you need to know the expiry date of the car seat?

It is important to know the expiry date of the car seat that you are using. Car seats expire because over time the plastic parts begin to break down. Everyday use of the seat can also cause wear and tear.

Expiry dates can be different depending on the brand of seat that you buy. First, check the date that your car seat was made. This can be found on the plastic part of your car seat. Sometimes the expiry date for the car seat is listed in the same place. If it is not, you will find information about the expiry date in your owner's manual. You can also call the manufacturer for this information.



## How do you properly install a car seat?

It is important that your baby's car seat is installed properly. To make sure that you are using a rear-facing seat correctly, check the following:

- The car seat is in the back seat and faces the rear of the vehicle.
- The seat belt or Universal Anchorage System is tightened on the car seat. The seat should not be able to move more than 2.5 cm (one inch). Do not use a seat belt and Universal Anchorage System at the same time.
- The chest clip is level with your baby's arm pits.
- The harness straps are tightened so you can only fit one finger between the strap and your baby's collar bone.
- The harness strap comes out of the car seat at or below the baby's shoulders.
- The car seat leans back at a 45-degree angle.
- The carrying handle is in the correct position.

Keep in mind that not all vehicles and car seats are the same. Make sure that you check your vehicle manual and your car seat manual for installation instructions.

For more information on how to install a car seat visit:

<https://skprevention.ca/passenger-and-vehicle-safety/#how-to-install-a-car-seat>

## **Car Seat Safety Checks**

Make sure your baby is safe while travelling. Technicians at car seat clinics (or by appointment) can show you how to put your seat in your vehicle properly. These checks are free of charge. Go to <https://www.sgi.sk.ca/technicians> to find a technician or car seat clinic near you.



## Child Care and Support

### Who can support you?

You will need support when your baby is born. Make a plan now so that you are ready when you need help.

- Who can you turn to if you have questions?
- Can you call someone to help take care of your baby if you need a break?
- How can you keep connected with your friends and community?

### Why do you need to think about daycare now?

Wait lists for daycare centres can be up to a year. Plan ahead if you plan to send your baby to daycare.

### Do you need a babysitter?

If you are looking for babysitters, you may want to ask if they have completed a babysitting course. Babysitting courses are offered across Saskatchewan. They teach youth how to care for children and how to handle emergencies. Youth are also taught basic first aid skills.

### What should you tell people who are going to care for your baby?

When family members or others care for your baby, make sure that everyone knows the routines you have in place for your baby.

Share any steps you take to keep your baby safe, for example, placing your baby on their back to sleep.



## Crying

### Why do babies cry?

Crying is normal and some babies cry more than others. Most often, babies cry because they are hungry, need a diaper change, or want to be comforted. Sometimes they cry to release tension. Crying might also mean that your baby does not feel well.



Crying does not mean your baby is angry with you. Your baby is not acting badly when they cry.

### What can you do to soothe your baby?

Your baby will not always be soothed the same way each time. You might have to try different things. Here are some ways you can help calm your baby.

- Burp your baby after feedings.
- Change your baby's diaper.
- Feed your baby.
- Gently rock your baby.
- Give your baby a warm bath.
- Massage your baby's back.
- Offer your baby their favourite toy.
- Sing or hum to your baby.
- Snuggle your baby close to your chest.
- Take your baby for a walk.
- Take your baby for a car ride.
- Walk and gently bounce your baby.
- Wrap or swaddle your baby in a soft blanket.

### **Why do they say to never shake a baby?**

When you cannot calm your baby, it is normal to sometimes feel anxious or frustrated. Be careful. It is important to know when you are feeling this way and plan ahead. If your baby is in a safe place, take a break and leave the room for a few minutes if you need to calm yourself.

Never shake your baby. Even a few seconds of shaking can cause serious damage because babies have weak neck muscles and heavy heads.

Shaking a baby can cause blindness, brain damage, or death.



## Feeding Your Baby

Your baby's appetite will change from day to day. As babies grow, the amount that they eat will increase.

### **Do you need to set a schedule for feeding your baby?**

Don't worry too much about a schedule. Learn when your baby is telling you that they are hungry. Feeding when your baby is hungry will keep everyone happy and make feeding easier.

Feeding can take up to 45 minutes. Don't rush your baby. Feeding is a special time to connect and help baby bond with you.

### **Why is skin-to-skin contact important?**

Hold your baby close to your body during feeding. Skin-to-skin contact is best. It is warm and your baby can feel your heartbeat. Whether you breastfeed or not, hold your baby so that their head is at the same level as your breast. This way, your baby can look into your eyes while they feed. This helps your baby connect with you. Some people use nursing pillows to help them get comfortable.

Some parents are worried about having skin-to-skin contact with their babies. They may feel that they are doing something wrong or inappropriate. It is natural to have skin-to-skin contact with your baby. In fact, skin-to-skin contact is one of the best ways that you can support your baby's growth and development.



### **What can you feed your newborn?**

Breast milk or formula will provide all that your baby needs for the first six months. Your baby should not be given other foods before this time.



## What are the benefits of breastfeeding?

Breastfeeding provides mothering, food, and protection, all at the same time.

It is a relationship with your baby that provides more time to enjoy your baby.

Here are several benefits of breastfeeding:

- Breast milk changes as babies develop to meet their needs.
- It is rare to run out of breast milk; you produce it as your baby needs it.
- Breast milk is easier to digest than formula.
- Breast milk helps build your baby's immune system and guards against infection.
- Breastfeeding is handy (convenient). There are no bottles or nipples to sterilize. There is no formula to buy, prepare, keep cool, or warm up.
- Breastfeeding is free.
- Breastfeeding helps you lose weight after your baby is born. Your body uses energy to make breast milk. Therefore, it burns calories and fat.
- Breastfeeding is environmentally friendly. There are no cans or packaging needed.
- Breastfed babies have a lower risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS, crib death).
- Breastfeeding helps protect you and your baby from some types of cancers. These include breast, cervix, ovarian, and some childhood cancers.
- Breastfeeding can decrease your baby's chance of getting cavities and allergies.
- Breastfeeding can decrease your feelings of stress and anxiety.
- Breastfeeding can help you and your baby connect to each other. Did you know that your baby cannot see very far in the first few months? When you hold your baby at your breast, it is a perfect distance from your face for your baby to see you. Your baby will also be soothed by the sound of your heartbeat.
- Partners and other family members can also connect with your baby by feeding them expressed milk. Expressed milk is breast milk that the mother has pumped and stored, which can be fed to your baby using a bottle at a later time.

## What if it is hard to start or continue breastfeeding?

Breastfeeding can be challenging. Nipple tenderness can occur in the early days while mom and baby are learning to make good connections at the breast. There will be support for you in the hospital and from your Public Health Nurse after you go home. Ask for coaching so you can avoid nipple damage and help baby get more milk. It takes patience to learn a new skill when you're recovering from the birth. You can be better prepared for breastfeeding by reviewing the '[Making Milk](#)' pamphlet series now. Talk to your healthcare providers or a lactation consultant if you have any questions or concerns.

Other useful resources on breastfeeding:

- Saskatchewan Lactation Consultant Association: <https://www.skslca.com/>.
- Breastfeeding Matters Saskatoon:  
<https://www.saskatoonbreastfeedingmatters.ca/index.html>
- Breastfeeding Committee of Saskatchewan: <https://www.thebcs.ca/>
- Moms and Kids Health Saskatchewan:  
<https://momsandkidssask.saskhealthauthority.ca/pregnancy-birth-newborns/postnatal-newborn-care/feeding-your-newborn>

## If you have HIV, why is it recommended not to breastfeed?

Some people cannot or should not breastfeed, including people living with HIV. This is because HIV can be passed to the baby through breast milk. If you are HIV positive, do not breastfeed. Free formula is available in Saskatchewan for mothers living with HIV.

To find out about the Saskatchewan Infant Formula program, contact:

- Prince Albert: 306-765-6535
- Regina: 306-766-3915
- Saskatoon: 306-655-1783



### **What do you need to know about formula feeding?**

Deciding to breastfeed or not is a personal choice. There are many reasons why you may or may not breastfeed. You are not a bad parent if you don't breastfeed. Do what is right for you and your child.

### **How much formula do you need to feed your baby?**

The amount of formula that your baby needs depend on both their weight and age. Most babies will eat as much as they need. If you are concerned about the amount that your baby is eating, ask your healthcare providers.

### **How should you prepare formula?**

Follow the directions on the package of formula you buy. If you use powdered formula that you mix with water, make sure the water you are using is safe to drink. If your drinking water is from a well or you are concerned about the safety of your water, have it tested before the baby is born. For more information on water testing in Saskatchewan, visit <https://www.saskhealthauthority.ca/facilities-locations/roy-romanov-provincial-laboratory/water-testing-public>. If you plan to use bottled water, get a brand that is not high in sodium (salt). Salt may be listed as Na on the label.

Until your baby is 6 months old, **all water** given to your baby should be boiled and cooled.

## How do you sterilize bottles?

If you use bottles, be sure to sterilize them before each use. This protects your baby from viruses, bacteria, fungus, and parasitic infections.

There are three main ways that you can sterilize. First, clean the bottle, nipple, and lid with dish detergent and hot water. Run water through the nipple for several seconds to be sure there is no milk (residue) left. Then, sterilize using one of these methods:

1. Boil: This is an easy and cheap way to sterilize bottles. Place bottles, nipples, and lids in a pot of water and bring it to a boil. Continue to boil for 2 minutes.
2. Electric steam sterilizing: A special machine sterilizes bottles, nipples, and lids that are placed upside down in the steamer. This takes 8-12 minutes.
3. Microwave steamer: These take 5-8 minutes on high heat. Be careful not to place anything metal in the steamer. These cost less than the electric steam sterilizing machines.

Always make sure that bottles, nipples, and lids are cool before feeding your baby.

Check bottles and nipples for chips and cracks. Throw out any that are damaged.



### **Are there foods or drinks that should not be given to babies?**

- Food and drinks, other than formula and breast milk, should not be given until your baby is 6 months old.
- Cow's milk (Homo, 1%, 2%, or cream) and goat's milk should not be fed to babies until they are 9 months old.
- Soy milk, rice milk, and other milk substitutes should not be given to babies until they are 2 years old.

## Labour and Delivery

The birth of your baby is a very exciting time, but it is okay to be scared about labour and delivery. Talk to your healthcare providers about what to expect. Get support from family and friends.

### What is labour?

Labour prepares your uterus to help deliver your baby. There is no set length of labour. Every person is different, so each labour will be different too.

### What are the stages of labour?

1. **Lightening:** Near the end of your pregnancy (often in the 9<sup>th</sup> month) your baby will move down in your body, into the position needed for delivery. This movement is called lightening. Many women are able to breathe easier and have less heartburn after this occurs. However, you may need to pee more often because your baby will be putting pressure on your bladder and kidneys.
2. **Mucous Plug:** As your cervix begins to thin and open, the mucous plug that covers your cervix will be released. You may find more discharge in your underwear.
3. **Bloody Show:** Some people get a pink, red, or brown discharge a few days before labour.
4. **Amniotic Sac:** When your baby is ready to be born, your amniotic sac will break. Liquid will come out of your vagina. This liquid should be clear and should not smell. If it does, let your healthcare providers know. When your amniotic sac breaks, call your healthcare providers to get instructions on what to do next.

5. **Contractions:** Throughout your 9<sup>th</sup> month of pregnancy, you might have contractions. If these are not regular, do not increase in intensity, and go away after a while, they are just your body's way of preparing for delivery. Labour contractions will become stronger over time, can be timed, and get closer together. They can be in both your back and front, and you may have a bloody show. During this time, your cervix will open up to 10 cm, and your baby will move down in your pelvis.
6. **Delivery:** By the time you are ready to deliver, your contractions will be very strong. Follow the instructions of your healthcare providers and work with them to push your baby out.
7. **Placenta Delivery:** After you have delivered your baby, you will still have small contractions. You will then deliver your placenta.



## What are some of the terms you might hear about labour and delivery?

You may hear these medical terms when you are giving birth:

- **Induction:** A healthcare provider will give you a medication that helps your body begin labour. You may be induced if your baby is overdue or for other health reasons.
- **Epidural:** This is a pain medication that is given to you in your spine. You will also be given fluids through an IV. It is your choice whether you have an epidural or not.
- **Episiotomy:** Sometimes, the healthcare provider will make a small cut (incision) between the vagina and anus (in the perineum) to make the vaginal opening bigger. An episiotomy may be done if your healthcare provider needs to use forceps during delivery.
- **Forceps:** This tool fits around the baby's head and helps with delivery.

## What is a Caesarean Section (C-section)?

During a C-section, the baby is delivered through a cut (incision) in your abdomen and uterus. Some people know they are having a C-section before they arrive at the hospital, and their healthcare providers will book a date for the delivery. Sometimes a C-section cannot be pre-planned but is needed to keep you and your baby safe and healthy. Your medical team will help you through this procedure.

Please note that even if you have had one C-section, you may be able to deliver vaginally in the future. Talk to your healthcare provider.



## Loving Care

Your baby depends on you to meet all their needs. Your baby needs your loving care.



### What is attachment?

Learn your baby's cues and respond in a loving, responsive way. When your baby gets their needs met, they are learning that you will provide a safe place to grow and explore the world. This special relationship is called attachment.

### How can you provide loving care?

Here are some suggestions for providing loving care:

- Touch your baby often.
- Hold your baby skin-to-skin.
- Sing songs to your baby.
- Create routines during feeding and diaper changes.
- Respond to your baby when they are upset.
- Enjoy spending time together with your baby.
- Make eye contact.
- Calm your baby when they cry.



## **Is your baby's brain developing?**

Your baby's brain develops very quickly in the first year of life. Positive experiences help your baby's brain to grow in healthy ways that will help them throughout life. Negative experiences can harm the way the baby's brain develops.



## Maternal Mental Health



During and after pregnancy, it is normal to have intense emotions. Talk to someone you trust about the way you feel. A friend, family member, or partner can support you. A new parent or pregnancy support group is a good place to share the way you feel.

### Where can you get help?

Maternal mental health concerns can be serious. They affect the health of the mother, baby, and others around them. Maternal mental health concerns often do not go away by themselves. Get help as soon as possible. Contact HealthLine 811 or talk to your healthcare providers. You can contact HealthLine by dialing 811 on your phone. It is confidential, free, and open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Translation is also available in over 100 languages. A registered psychiatric nurse or social worker will be available to listen to your concerns. They will help you manage your situation and connect you to services in your community.

### What are the symptoms of a mental health concern?

Having several of the following symptoms for more than two weeks could mean that you are depressed.

- Having less interest in normal activities.
- Crying for no reason.
- Feeling grumpy, angry, or sensitive.
- Feeling more tired than usual.
- Having more energy than usual.
- Having difficulty coping.
- Having trouble sleeping or sleeping too much.
- Having trouble concentrating.
- Feeling anxious or panicked.
- Thinking about hurting yourself, your baby, or others.
- Seeing things or hearing voices.

## Employment Insurance (EI) Maternity and Parental Benefits

The government provides financial assistance to people who are away from work because they are pregnant, have recently given birth, or are caring for their newborn or newly adopted child. This is known as Employment Insurance (EI) maternity and parental benefits.

You can decide to work right up until the time you give birth or decide to start receiving your benefits a few weeks before you have your baby.

### Differences between Maternity Benefits and Parental Benefits

Maternity benefits are benefits available to a person who is away from work because they are pregnant or have recently given birth. This benefit cannot be shared between parents.

Maternity benefits are available for up to a maximum of 15 weeks. You can start receiving maternity benefits as early as 12 weeks before your due date or the date you give birth. However, you will not be able to receive these benefits more than 17 weeks after your due date or the date you gave birth, whichever is later.

You can receive 55% of your earnings, up to a maximum of \$638 per week. A person receiving maternity benefits may also qualify for parental benefits.



Parental benefits are available to parents of a newborn or newly adopted child. There are two options:

- **Standard parental benefits** are available for up to 40 weeks, however one parent cannot receive more than 35 weeks.
- **Extended parental benefits** are available for up to 69 weeks, however one parent cannot receive more than 61 weeks.

You can start receiving parental benefits the week your child is born or adopted. Standard parental benefits are calculated at a rate of 55% of earnings with a weekly maximum of \$638. Extended parental benefits are calculated at a rate of 33% of earnings for up to a maximum of \$383 per week.

If sharing benefits with another parent, you must choose the same option, and each parent must submit an application. Parents can either take their benefits at the same time or one after another.

For more information about maternity and parental benefits, visit:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-maternity-parental.html>.

### **Applying for Benefits**

It is best if you apply for benefits as soon as you stop working. If you apply more than 4 weeks after you have stopped working, you may lose benefits. You can apply for maternity benefits and parental benefits at the same time, as this will save you time.

Parental benefits begin the week your child is born or adopted. To apply, you will need to complete an online application. You will need to include your personal information, your child's expected date of birth or date of adoption, and your records of employment.

For more information on how to apply, visit:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-maternity-parental/apply.html#h2.1-h3.2>.

## **Employment Insurance (EI) Sickness Benefits during Pregnancy**

If you have health complications during pregnancy, you could also be eligible for Employment Insurance (EI) sickness benefits. EI sickness benefits can provide you up to 15 weeks of financial assistance if you cannot work for medical reasons during your pregnancy. You could receive 55% of your earnings up to a maximum of \$638 a week.

To be eligible, you must show that:

- You are unable to work due to medical reasons. You will need to get a medical certificate as a proof. Medical reasons include illness, injury, quarantine, or any medical condition that prevents you from working.
- Your regular weekly earnings from work have decreased by more than 40% for at least 1 week.
- You have enough insured work hours (usually 600 hours) in the 52 weeks before your claim or since the start of your last claim, whichever is shorter.
- You do not have paid sick leave at your workplace or have used it up. Some employers provide their own paid sick leave or short-term disability plan. Before applying for EI sickness benefits, check with your employer to find out if there is a coverage plan in place.



For more information on how to apply for EI sickness benefits, visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-sickness.html>.

## **Working while on Employment Insurance (EI) benefits**

If you earn money while receiving maternity or parental benefits, the government may deduct money from your benefits, depending on how much money you make from your work. For more information, visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/ei/ei-list/working-while-claim.html>.

## Safety

How can you keep your baby safe? There is a lot to think about with a newborn.

### How can you keep your baby safe during bath time?

- Before you bathe your baby, test the temperature of the water.
- Test the water with your inner arm, wrist, or elbow. The bath water should feel warm but not hot.
- Turn your water heater down to 49° Celsius.
- You baby's skin will burn 4 times faster than yours.
- Do not use bath seats or bath rings as they can cause drowning.
- Do not leave your baby alone or in the care of another child while in the bath.

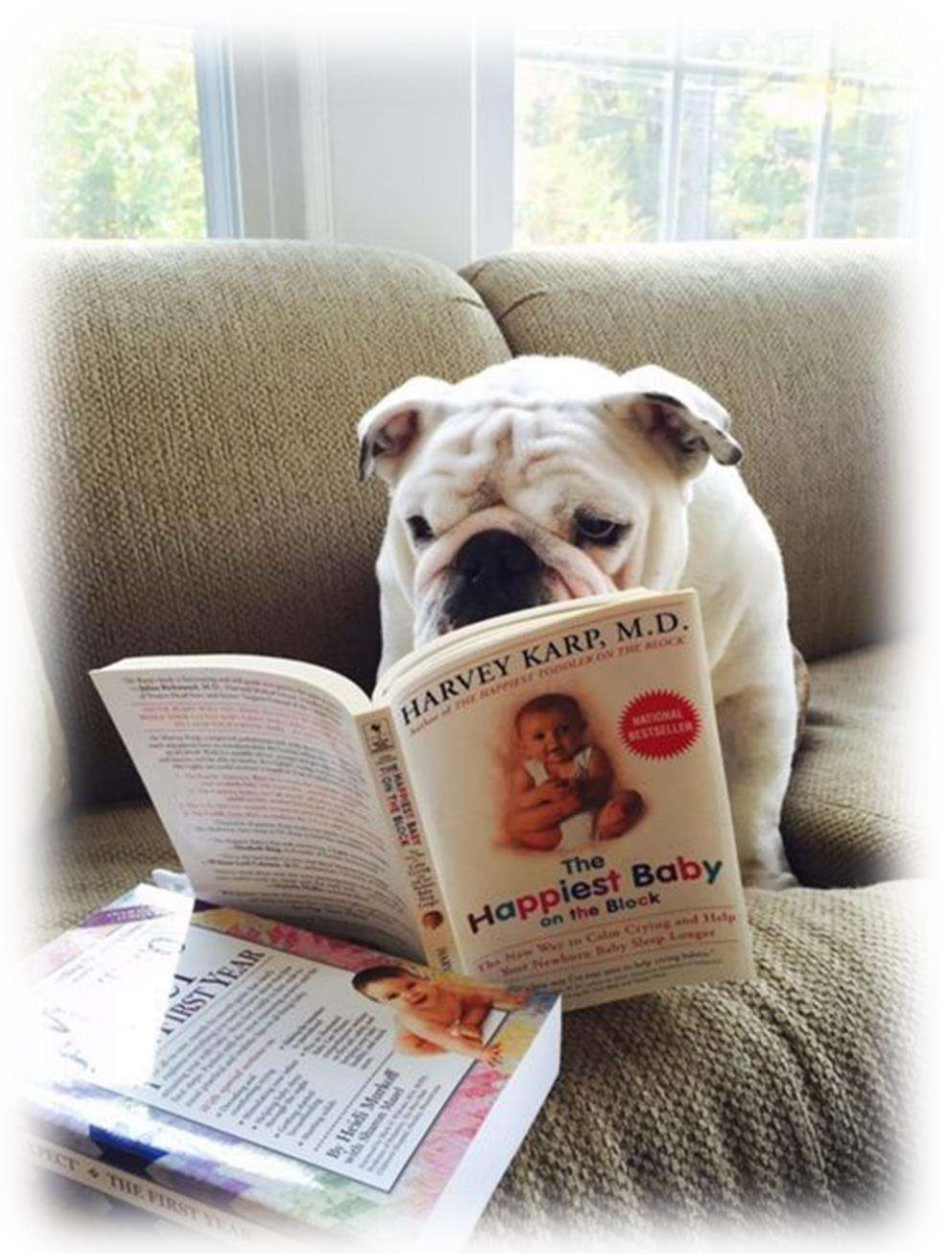


## How can you prevent falls?

- Always use safety straps and harnesses when they are available.
- When using a change table or other high surface for changing or dressing your baby, always keep one hand on them.
- The safest place to leave your baby alone is in their playpen or crib.
- Do not place an infant in a car seat or infant holder on any surface other than the floor.

## How can you keep your baby safe around pets?

- No matter how much you trust your family pet, remember that it is an animal. Animals act on instinct. Do not leave your baby alone with pets.
- Do not force the introduction of your pet and your baby. Watch carefully as your pet gets to know your baby.
- Wash your hands after touching your pet and before touching your baby.



## Can your baby overheat?

### Temperature

Be careful not to overheat your baby. If a room is comfortable for you to be in with short sleeves, it will also be comfortable for a baby in similar clothing. Your baby should not feel hot to touch, appear flushed, or be sweating.

### How can you tell if the equipment you are using is safe?

- Just because something is made for a baby does not mean it is safe for a baby to use. For example, infant bath seats, crib bumpers, and baby pillows and blankets should not be used.
- Due to safety concerns, it is against the law to buy, sell, or use a baby walker in Canada.
- When you buy new equipment, complete the registration card. The company can then contact you if there are any recalls on the equipment.
- If you buy second-hand baby equipment, call the manufacturer or visit: <https://healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/index-eng.php?cat=99> to make sure the equipment has not been recalled. For information about recalled car seats, visit Transport Canada: <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/motorvehiclesafety/safedrivers-childsafety-notice-menu-907.htm>.
- For safety information when buying a second-hand car seat, visit: <https://www.sgi.sk.ca/carseats>.



## Sex after Pregnancy

### When can you have sex after pregnancy?

There is no rule about when you should start having sex after pregnancy. It is important to wait until your body heals. This can take 4-6 weeks depending on the delivery of the baby. Some people wait until their healthcare provider gives them the go-ahead.

There are many things that may make you decide to wait longer to have sex. These include feeling tired, pain, and stress. It is okay to wait until you are ready to have sex. Talk to your partner about how you feel. Try out other forms of intimacy.

### Is sex different for you now?

The hormonal changes during pregnancy can change your body. Your vagina may not be as lubricated as it was pre-pregnancy. This may cause discomfort during sex. Talk to your partner about what pleases you. Take your time. Try a vaginal lubricant or cream.

You may also find that the muscles in your vagina are not as tight as they used to be. This may affect how you feel during sex. You can tighten these muscles by doing Kegel exercises. Tighten your pelvic muscles like you do when you are stopping your pee mid-stream. Hold for 10 seconds and then release. Kegel exercises can also help prevent problems with incontinence (leaking pee).

### How long should you wait until your next baby?

To give your body time to heal, it is recommended that you wait 18-24 months before becoming pregnant again.

## Do you need contraception?

If you are having sex and do not want to become pregnant again, it is important to use contraception (birth control). You can get pregnant even before you start having your period again.

Breastfeeding does not guarantee that you will not become pregnant.

There are several forms of birth control that you can use while breastfeeding, including condoms. Talk to your healthcare providers about your options.



## Sleeping for You and Your Baby

Where will your baby sleep when you bring them home? Will they be in your room? Will they have their own room?

### What position should your baby sleep in?

Put your baby to sleep on their back.

This decreases their risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). SIDS is the leading cause of death in healthy infants up to one year of age. SIDS occurs when a healthy baby dies suddenly during sleep.

Continue to place your baby on their back to sleep, even if they can roll over by themselves. At this time, if they roll off their back it is safe for them to sleep in a different position.



### Where should your baby sleep?

The safest place for your baby to sleep is on their back in a crib, cradle, or bassinet. Health Canada recommends that parents share a room with their baby for the first six months. This can help you respond to your baby when they need you.

Bed sharing is not recommended. Bed sharing is when an adult sleeps with a baby on the same surface, like a bed or couch. Bed sharing increases the risk of suffocation.

Babies should not be put to sleep on water beds, air mattresses, couches, futons, or armchairs. Sleeping on these surfaces can increase the risk of suffocation.

Your baby's crib should be empty except for a firm mattress and a fitted sheet. Loose bedding and other objects in the crib can cause suffocation. Avoid having comforters, heavy blankets, quilts, pillows, foam padding, stuffed toys, bumper pads, and sleep positioners in the crib.

If your baby falls asleep in their stroller, baby carrier, or car seat, move them to a safe place to sleep once you have reached your destination.

Make sure there are no hazards around the crib, bassinet, or cradle. Hazards can include blind cords, electrical cords, electrical plugs, baby monitors, lamps, and windows.



### **How warm should you keep your baby at night?**

The temperature of the room your baby is sleeping in should be warm enough for short sleeves. Your baby does not need to be covered with a heavy blanket. Sleep sacks are a good option. For more information on safe sleep for your baby, visit:

<http://www.skprevention.ca/safesleep/>.

## Supplies

### Where can you get information about recalls and safety alerts?

Before buying any equipment or using second-hand equipment, check with [Health Canada \(http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/index-eng.php\)](http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/index-eng.php) for recalls and safety alerts.

### What should you bring to the hospital?

Pack a bag for the hospital before you go into labour. Make sure you include things your baby will need on the trip home.

For you:

- Health card
- Paperwork that your healthcare providers have given you
- Picture ID (identification), like a driver's license
- Maternity underwear (3-4 pairs)
- Heavy flow maternity/menstrual pads
- Nursing bra
- Bathrobe
- Comfortable pajamas
- Eyeglasses, if you need them (it's better not to bring contact lenses)
- Slippers
- Socks
- Things that help you relax (pillow, blanket, music, book)
- Toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, deodorant, brush
- Going home outfit



For baby:

- Baby (receiving) blanket
- Car seat (approved for use in Canada)
- Diapers
- Going home outfit (including socks and a cap)

### What supplies should you have ready at home?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baby clothes                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Bottle and nipples (optional)       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baby soap and shampoo                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Breast pump (optional)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baby nail trimmers or nail file       | <input type="checkbox"/> Baby monitor (optional)             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Car seat                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Baby powder (optional)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crib, cradle, or bassinette           | <input type="checkbox"/> Baby oil or lotion (optional)       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Receiving blankets                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Change table (optional)             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sheets for bassinette or crib         | <input type="checkbox"/> Change pad (optional)               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Warm clothes for wintertime           | <input type="checkbox"/> Nipple cream (optional)             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wash cloths and towels                | <input type="checkbox"/> Nursing bras and pads (optional)    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newborn diapers (cloth or disposable) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ointment for diaper rash (optional) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baby wipes (optional)                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Soother (optional)                  |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sterilizing equipment (optional)    |



## Tobacco Smoke Exposure

### What are the ways babies can be exposed to tobacco smoke?

Babies can be exposed to environmental tobacco smoke in three ways:

1. They can inhale smoke when the smoker exhales.
2. They can be exposed to the chemicals that are released when tobacco is burned.
3. They can come into contact with the chemical residue left on a smoker's clothing, body, or hair, as well as furniture and carpeting.

### What kind of health problems can children have from being exposed to tobacco smoke?

Your newborn should be in a smoke-free environment. Tobacco smoke can cause health problems for your baby. Some of these can affect your baby throughout life.

Babies are affected more than adults by exposure to tobacco smoke. Their lungs are still growing and developing. Children breathe faster than adults. This means that they inhale more air than adults. They are also breathing air into a tinier body. Normal childhood behaviour, like putting things in the mouth, can also increase a baby's exposure to environmental tobacco smoke.



Being exposed to environmental tobacco smoke can cause many health problems. The following is a list of health problems that can occur in babies.

- An increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). SIDS is the leading cause of death in healthy infants up to one year of age. SIDS occurs when a healthy baby dies suddenly during sleep.
- An increased number of colds and respiratory illnesses like bronchitis or pneumonia.
- An increased number of ear infections.
- An increased likelihood of having enlarged adenoids. Enlarged adenoids reduce the amount of air that can flow through the throat and nose.
- An increased risk of developing asthma.
- An increased risk of developing allergies.
- An increased risk of having problems with learning, memory, language development, understanding visual information, and balance.





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