

Preparing for Baby

Infant Safety

During your pregnancy you can begin to prepare for your new baby by taking steps to create a safe living environment. Your home and car should be modified to minimize any potential dangers to infants or small children. You will want to decrease clutter in areas where the baby will be active. Tie up loose cords, cover electrical outlets, and place barriers that will keep babies from areas that contain dangerous or harmful objects. Many over-the-counter home safety products are available to help you “child-proof” your home. Try to become familiar with these products so that you can determine which ones may be needed in your home.

Infant Basic Life Support

Another important aspect of infant safety is basic life support. We strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with these techniques because basic skills will be invaluable during times of emergency. There are many classes and resources available to help you learn what to do if you need to provide infant cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

Infant Car Seats

Infants and small children must always be securely fastened in a size- and age-appropriate car seat when riding in a vehicle. The infant car seat should be placed in a rear-facing position in the back seat of your car. Either latches or safety belts should be used to secure the seat in a stable position. You will need to have your car seat properly installed in your car so that the baby can be secured in it at the time of hospital discharge.

Choosing a Pediatrician

Prior to the delivery of your baby you should choose a pediatrician who will take care of the baby after it is born. Your pediatrician and his or her partners will provide care for your child from birth through adolescence and early adulthood. When choosing a pediatrician it is important to find someone that you can trust and rely on for your child’s health care issues for many years to come. Most providers are members of group practices. Thus, you should also be comfortable with other providers in the group. There will be times when your child will need to see someone besides your chosen pediatrician. Other factors that may influence your decision about a pediatrician include, 1) insurance coverage -- Do they accept your child’s insurance? Are they accepting new patients at this time? 2) office location(s) -- Is the office convenient to home/work/school/daycare? 3) office hours & availability -- Do they offer night or weekend appointments? Who deals with urgent situations? How will nighttime emergencies be handled? 4) professional reputation & credentials -- Is he or she certified by the American Board of Pediatrics? Are they well respected by medical peers and the community?

When choosing your pediatrician, be sure to ask family members, coworkers, and friends about their providers. Our physicians may also be able to recommend a doctor or practice based on your desires and needs.

Preparing for Baby (Cont'd)

Pets & Your New Baby

If you have pets, you will want to keep them in a separate area from the baby when you first come home from the hospital. Many parents bring a blanket or towel to the hospital to be used with their newborn. This object is then taken home so that the family pet can become familiar with the smell of the new baby. It is important to always supervise pets when they are in areas where they have contact with the baby. Never leave your newborn alone with your pet. Even the calmest and tamest of pets may react adversely to the presence of your new baby. Your veterinarian may also be able to give you some advice about helping your pet to adjust to the new baby.

Newborn Behaviors

Getting used to having a new baby in your house is an exciting yet stressful experience. Be sure to rest and enjoy your baby especially during the first few days and weeks after your baby is born. Try to sleep when your baby sleeps! During those times you may feel the need to clean or do chores, but this can be valuable nap & resting time. Accept visitors when you are ready, and don't be afraid to ask others for help. No parents can be expected to know everything about caring for their newborn, especially if it is their first baby.