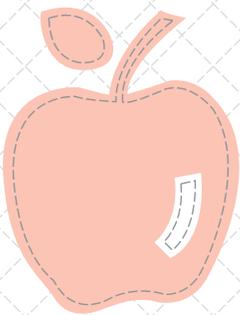
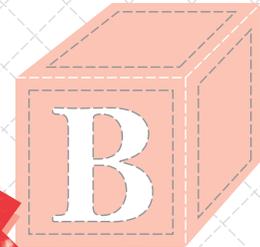
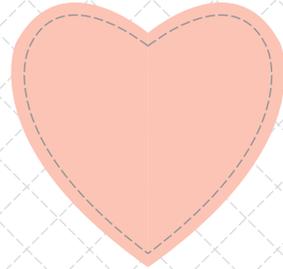
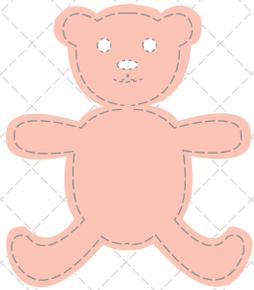


A Healthy Start



A NEW LIFE

A Healthy Start

Prenatal care is part of a healthy pregnancy.

Good prenatal care includes regular visits to your doctor or Nurse Practitioner. You should also attend prenatal classes. Talk with your health care provider or hospital to find out how to register for classes.

During your pregnancy, you should feel comfortable asking questions, and you should feel comfortable with the answers you get.

Your family doctor or Nurse Practitioner are a good choice for your prenatal care. If you don't have a health care provider, ask friends and family about theirs.

But don't wait too long. Early prenatal care and prenatal classes are very important. If you have good prenatal care, you are more likely to have a healthy baby.

Maybe you have already had your first prenatal visit. If not, make an appointment soon. What you can expect at your first prenatal visit is described on page 4.

After this, your visits will likely be shorter. Your health care provider will check your weight, blood pressure and urine (pee), and will measure the height of your uterus to see how the baby is growing and will listen to your baby's heartbeat. All of these tests show you how healthy you are and measure your baby's growth.

Each visit should also include time for you to ask questions. It is a good idea to take a list of questions with you.

Besides the tests that all women have on their first prenatal visit, your health care provider may order other prenatal tests, such as ultrasound, amniocentesis, or non-stress testing. If your health care provider wants you to have any of these tests, be sure you understand the reason. Continue to ask questions until you are sure you understand.

Visiting Your Health Care Provider

Questions to ask your health care provider:

- What is the test?
- Why do I need it?
- What is the health care provider looking for?
- What effects will the test have on me and my baby?
- What will happen if the test results are not normal?

What To Expect On Your First Prenatal Visit

- Your health care provider will ask a lot of questions to obtain your medical history.
- You will have a complete physical exam.
- You will have an internal (pelvic) exam.
- The health care provider will take samples from inside your vagina to test for cancer and infection.
- You will need to pee in a bottle (urine test).
- Your blood pressure will be checked.
- You will need to go to a lab or hospital for blood tests. Your health care provider will tell you about the tests you will need.
- Your health care provider will need to know if you have had a vaccination for German measles (Rubella).
- Your health care provider may ask you questions about HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). Prenatal blood tests routinely include a blood test for HIV. You may want to ask more about this if you have concerns.



What is Normal?

How can you know what is normal?

During pregnancy, your body goes through many changes. Most of them are normal and healthy. They are the kind of things you should talk about with your doctor or nurse during your visits.

But when all that is happening is new, it can be hard to tell what is normal and what is not.

IMPORTANT

There are some things that you will need to call your doctor about right away.

- Bleeding from your vagina—even if it’s just a little bit of blood (spotting)
- Pain in your abdomen—more than gas pains
- Fluid coming out of or leaking from your vagina (water breaking)
- Sudden swelling of your hands, feet, or face—swelling that is different or worse than any you may already have
- Sudden weight gain
- A rash or unusual lesions on your skin
- A bad headache
- Seeing spots, flashes, or blind spots
- Blurred vision
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Fainting
- Pain or a burning feeling when you pee (urinate)
- Chills or fever
- Throwing up and feeling sick (nausea or vomiting) that is more than morning sickness
- Fewer baby movements later in pregnancy. You’ll know if there’s a change as your baby grows.
- Exposure to rubella, hepatitis, or sexually transmitted infections

Healthy Choices

When you are pregnant, there are many things to think about and many choices to make. Should you change what you eat? Should you travel? Is it safe to take drugs? This section will give you a chance to think about some of these questions.

Eating for Two

When you eat, you are feeding your baby. The food you eat should supply your baby with everything he or she needs to grow. The food you eat is important for your health and your baby's health.

Pregnancy is not a time to diet. It is normal, and healthy to gain weight when you are pregnant. Ask your health care provider how much weight you should gain during your pregnancy.

As your body gets used to being pregnant, you may find that you feel hungry all the time. If you are hungry, eat. But eat something that's healthy for you and for your baby. Celery and carrot sticks, fresh fruit, whole grain toast, and bran muffins are all healthy snacks.

See Section 5 - Healthy Eating, to learn more about healthy foods for a healthy pregnancy.

Take Care of Your Teeth

You may have heard that you will lose one tooth for every baby. This is not true. You don't lose teeth because you are pregnant. You lose teeth because you don't take care of them.

Dental care is very important during pregnancy. Pregnancy affects all parts of your body, including your teeth and gums. Plaque forms on your teeth more quickly during pregnancy. Your gums can be red and sore. They become infected. Brushing and flossing your teeth regularly is even more important now.

Make a special effort to see a dentist while you are pregnant. Be sure to tell the dentist that you are pregnant.

Think about having regular dental care after your baby is born. Your teeth, and your children's teeth, are meant to last a lifetime.



If you smoke, this is the best time to stop. When you smoke, your baby smokes too. Stop and think what that means before you light up a cigarette.

Even if you don't smoke yourself, second-hand smoke from the people around you can harm your baby.

No Smoking, Baby Growing

Why should you quit now?

Before they are born, babies need a good supply of oxygen and food. They get both from their mother's blood. The chemicals in tobacco smoke make the mother's blood less able to carry oxygen. If you smoke, your baby gets less food and less oxygen. Here are some of the problems caused by smoking:

- You are twice as likely to have a miscarriage as a woman who does not smoke.
- Your baby is much more likely to be born too early.
- Your baby is more likely to be born small, and small babies are more likely to be sick.
- You may have problems in labour and delivery.
- Your baby is more likely to be stillborn or die within the first weeks of life.

If you smoke after your baby is born, the nicotine and chemicals go into your breast milk. Some babies are affected by the nicotine. They are difficult to calm down. Ask your health care provider about how to breastfeed if you are a smoker.

Second-hand smoke harms babies before and after they are born.

- Smoking around babies is a risk factor for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Children who live with smokers are more likely to have breathing problems such as asthma and bronchitis.
- Children who live with smokers also have more colds and ear and throat infections.



What can you do?

The best thing is to stop now. It may seem that stopping right now would make your life more stressful. But smoking adds stress to your body. It speeds up your heart and also your baby's. It raises your blood pressure. If you stop now, you can prevent most of the bad effects smoking will have on your baby. As well, after birth your child will not be exposed to cigarette smoke in the house.

If you live with smokers, let them know what their smoking can do to your baby. Even if they are not ready to quit, you can reduce the amount of smoke in the house by having some rules.

- Make your home smoke free by asking people to smoke outside.
- Make your car smoke-free. Smoke builds up very quickly in a small, closed space like a car.

Smoking is an addiction. No one believes that it is easy to stop but millions of people have done it. When you are pregnant, it is one of the most important things you can do for your baby. Talk to your doctor before using nicotine patches or gum.

If you need help to quit or to keep your home and workplace smoke-free, contact Public Health Services or the Smokers' Helpline (www.smokershelpline.ca or 1-877-513-5333).

Cannabis

Even though it's legal for adults in NB to buy cannabis (or marijuana), it should not be used while pregnant or breastfeeding. Using cannabis during pregnancy may cause your baby to be born with a low birth weight. It can also get to your baby in your breastmilk. Cannabis could harm your baby's brain and lead to life-long problems with learning, hyperactivity, depression, and anxiety. There is no safe amount to use while you are pregnant or breastfeeding. If you find it hard to stop using cannabis, you should try to cut back. Please talk to your health care provider or contact Addiction Services in your area if you need support (www.gnb.ca/0378/centers-e.asp).

When you drink, your baby drinks too. This could cause your baby to be born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) or other health problems called Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder or FASD. A child with FAS or FASD may have low birth weight and problems with thinking, speaking, hearing, or learning. These problems do not go away when the child grows up. Contact the Victorian Order of Nurses (V.O.N.) for more information about Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (www.von.ca). Click on 'Services' and then Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FASD).

Alcohol and Pregnancy Do not Mix

IMPORTANT

There is no amount of alcohol that is known to be safe during pregnancy. There is about the same amount of alcohol in:

- A bottle of beer
- A glass of wine
- A shot of liquor

Each of these affects your baby in exactly the same way.

So the best choice is not to drink at all when you are pregnant.

If you do drink, you should know that no kind of alcohol is safer than another. If you have been drinking a lot, counselling may help you stop. For your own sake, and your baby's, please look for the help you need. Contact Addiction Services (www.gnb.ca/0378/centers-e.asp) or ask your health care provider about programs in your community.



Taking Medicines

As soon as you know that you are pregnant, talk with your doctor about the drugs you are using. This includes: all prescription drugs and all of the medicine you can buy at the drug store, such as aspirin, pain relievers, cough and cold remedies, and even vitamin pills.

If you go to more than one health care provider, make sure that all of them know you are pregnant. Tell all of them about the medicines that you are using.

To be safe, you should not take any drugs unless your health care provider says it's okay. If you do need to take medication, follow your health care provider's directions.

Any drug you take can reach your baby. So before you take any medicine, ask your health care provider, pharmacist, and even your dentist these questions:

- What is it?
- What is it for?
- What will it do to me and my baby?
- What are the side effects?
- What is the smallest dose I can take?
- Can it wait until after the baby is born?

Using 'Street' Drugs

If you take drugs like cocaine, heroin or speed (amphetamines) so does your baby. Any drug you take reaches your baby. Your baby can become addicted to these drugs. They can harm both you and your baby.

If you use drugs, it may not be easy to stop without help. For your own sake and your baby's, please look for the help you need. Contact Addiction Services (www.gnb.ca/0378/centers-e.asp) or ask your health care provider about programs in your community.



Drugs and Danger to Your Baby

Name of Drug	What are the Risks?	Here's what we suggest:
Alcohol	Baby may have low birth weight, problems with thinking, speaking, hearing or learning. The danger is higher if the mother drinks a lot and often.	“Safe” level is not known. The New Brunswick Department of Health recommends NO ALCOHOL during pregnancy. Talk to your doctor or Addiction services right away if you need help to stop drinking.
Amphetamines (speed)	Greater risk of miscarriage, early birth, low birth weight.	DO NOT USE. Talk to your doctor or Addiction Services right away if you are a user.
Antacids	May be safe if not used often.	Use only once in awhile. Do not take more than what is suggested on the label. Talk to your pharmacist about which is best during pregnancy.
Antihistamines (cold and Allergy medicines)	Not much is known about the risks of taking these drugs during pregnancy.	Talk to your doctor before you use them.
Caffeine	May harm baby if taken in large amounts. Caffeine is found in coffee, tea, chocolate, cola drinks and energy drinks.	Use only small amounts of any food or drink that has caffeine. DO NOT USE energy drinks as they contain larger amounts of caffeine.
Cannabis (Marijuana, Hashish)	Baby may not grow in a normal way, may be smaller than should be, may have problems with addiction or withdrawal later.	DO NOT USE. Talk to your doctor or local Addiction Services about stopping.
Cocaine, Crack	Risk of miscarriage, early birth, baby may not grow in normal way.	DO NOT USE. Talk to your doctor or local Addiction Services right away if you are a user.
Hemorrhoid preparations	No known risk.	Ask your doctor or pharmacist to suggest something that will work. If you need to use a cream for a long time, ask your doctor if it is okay to do so.

Name of Drug	What are the Risks?	Here's what we suggest:
Household chemicals, paints, liquid cleaners, fertilizers	Breathing the fumes may hurt the fetus.	Use with caution. Keep the windows open or use a fan.
Laxatives	Bulk-forming laxatives such as Metamucil are safe.	Use other types only if your doctor says it is okay.
Medicine for Nausea (morning sickness)	These drugs have different risks to unborn baby.	DO NOT USE unless your doctor says it is okay.
Opiates such as heroin and illegal prescription drugs (e.g., Percocet, Talwin, Darvon)	Risk of miscarriage, early birth, difficult birth, baby born with breathing problems, signs of drug withdrawal, slow mental and physical development.	DO NOT USE. Talk to your doctor or Addiction Services right away if you are a user. Note: Using dirty needles (not sterilized) to take drugs makes the risk of getting Hepatitis and AIDS/HIV higher for both mother and baby.
Pain Killers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-prescription, containing ASA (e.g., Aspirin, Bufferin, Anacin) or acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol, Atasol) • Non-prescription, containing codeine (e.g., 222s, Tylenol with codeine) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe to use once in awhile. • (Probably) safe to use sometimes. 	You should only use these once in awhile. Check with your doctor before using them often. Do not take more than is suggested on the label. Do not use ASA during the last three months of pregnancy. Check with your doctor.
Sleeping Pills	The risk to the baby depends on the kind of sleeping pill. If you use them often, the baby may have breathing problems at birth. Baby may suffer from signs of withdrawal.	Use only if your doctor says it is okay. You may need your doctor's help to stop if you use sleeping pills often.

Name of Drug	What are the Risks?	Here's what we suggest:
Tobacco	The more you smoke, the more risk of miscarriage, early birth, problems in labour and at birth; small baby, stillbirth and crib death. Children who have tobacco smoke in the house have higher risk of crib death, breathing problems such as asthma and bronchitis. They have more colds and more ear and throat infections.	DO NOT USE. If you need help to stop, talk to your doctor or call the Smokers' Helpline free of charge at 1-877-513-5333.
Tranquilizers	If used often, the baby may be born with breathing problems or signs of withdrawal	Use only if your doctor says it is okay. You may need your doctor's help to stop if you use these drugs often.

Many of us use caffeine without knowing it. Did you know that there is caffeine in coffee, tea, cola drinks, chocolate, and many medicines?

Caffeine

No one really knows what effect caffeine can have on an unborn baby. We do know that it is a stimulant. It makes people feel jumpy. For this reason alone it's a good idea to limit it.

How much is too much? Although we don't really know, these guidelines will help keep you within a safe limit.

- Drink no more than one or two cups of coffee or tea each day.
- Read the labels on foods, drinks and medicines. Choose those that have the least caffeine.

If you love to eat chocolate, try to replace it with healthy snacks like fresh fruit, yogurt, or an oatmeal cookie. See Section 5- Healthy Eating to learn more about choosing good foods and avoiding caffeine.

Infection and Illness

It is common sense to stay away from sick people while you're pregnant. Try to avoid people who have colds, coughs, sore throats, flu, contagious diseases, skin rashes, and sexually transmitted infections.

If you do get sick or if you have signs of the flu, make an appointment to see your doctor.

Remember—don't take any medicine on your own. If you have a cold or other mild sickness, get lots of rest, drink plenty of fluids, and use a humidifier.

Tell your doctor if you have been exposed to any serious illness, including infections that come from having sex.

Travel

Whether you travel depends on how you feel and how long the journey will be. When in doubt, check with your doctor.

Car Travel



As long as you are comfortable driving, you can continue to do so. Remember that you still need to wear both the lap belt and the shoulder belt. If it is worn correctly, the seat belt will not harm your baby. Here are some tips:

- The lap belt should be snug and low over the pelvic bones. Do not buckle it across your soft stomach area.
- The shoulder belt should be worn across the chest. You can get an extension for your seat belt if it is too short.
- Common sense is your best guide when you travel by car.
- Try not to take long trips alone.
- If you do go on a long trip, plan to rest every 160 km (100 miles). Get out of the car and walk around for a few minutes. Allow plenty of time to use the washroom.
- When you have a choice, drive on major roads that have more traffic. This will make it easy for you to find places to stop if you need to use a telephone or washroom.
- Take a small pillow to support your back. This can make a long drive more comfortable.
- Think about going by train or air instead. You may find them less tiring than car travel.

Air Travel

Most airlines need a letter from your doctor if you want to fly during the last month of pregnancy. To avoid problems, ask about the airline's rules before you buy an airline ticket.

When you fly, your feet may swell. Wear loose, comfortable shoes. Walk in the aisle at least once an hour. Drink plenty of juice and water to prevent fluid loss.

Travel Vaccines (Immunization)

If you plan to visit a country that requires vaccinations, check with your local V.O.N. Link: www.von.ca. Click on Locations.

When you call, tell them where you plan to travel and that you are pregnant. They will be able to tell you whether the vaccines you need are safe during pregnancy.

During pregnancy you may want to be extra careful with certain things that are around you every day.

Dangers Around You

Household and Garden Chemicals

Avoid them if you can, but if you must use them, follow the directions on the label with great care.

If you do any indoor painting, such as the baby's room, be sure there is plenty of air flowing through the room. If you can, keep the windows open. Also, some stores sell indoor paint that is less toxic than normal paint. It costs more but it may be worth the cost, if you can afford it.

X-Rays

X-rays may damage an unborn baby especially early in your pregnancy. The best advice is to avoid all X-rays while you are pregnant. This includes dental X-rays.

If you need to have X-rays, be sure to tell your doctor, dentist, radiologist, or the person giving you the X-ray that you are pregnant. They will take special care to protect your baby.

Pets

Some pets such as cats, turtles, and iguanas carry infections that could harm your baby. For example, outdoor cats may carry a germ that causes toxoplasmosis, which would hurt your baby's development. Be very careful when you are touching cats or cat litter boxes. Avoid working in soil where cat waste (feces) is buried. Have someone else change the litter boxes. Always wash your hands with soap and water after touching pets.

Working When You Are Pregnant

For most jobs, it is fine to work while you are pregnant. You may find that you need to rest more often and make some changes so you can be comfortable at work.

Many women need extra rest in the first three and last three months of pregnancy. Try to nap when you feel sleepy. If there is a place at work where you can lie down, you may find that resting on your side at lunch or during a break is a big help.

Computer Screens (Video Display Terminals)

Many people wonder whether the computer screen (or video display terminal) might be dangerous during pregnancy. So far, research shows that they won't hurt you or your baby. Pregnant women who work at computer screens do NOT need to wear special clothing or lead aprons.

Workplace Dangers

Many workplaces contain things that may cause birth defects or miscarriages. The main dangers are from chemicals, solvents, gases, metals, and radiation. If you are concerned about this and wonder if your workplace has these dangers, talk to your doctor or ask questions in your prenatal class. It's your job to know what the risks are in different kinds of jobs.

You could also ask your Health and Safety Committee for information. If your workplace does not have this kind of Committee, you might want to start one with your co-workers.

Share Your Feelings

Pregnancy is a time of growth and change. Your body is changing and your feelings change along with it.

You may find that your feelings change so often - and so quickly—that you feel as if you are on a roller coaster. One minute you're up, and the next you're down.

These mood changes can be a surprise. But they are a normal way of dealing with all the changes that come with pregnancy.

You do not need medicine to help you. You need time, patience, love, and support. Ask the people around you for the help you need. Talk about your fears and your worries. Share your dreams and plans. If you need a hug or a back rub or a shoulder to cry on, ask for it. No matter how much people care about you and want to help, they can't read your mind. They won't know what you need unless you tell them.

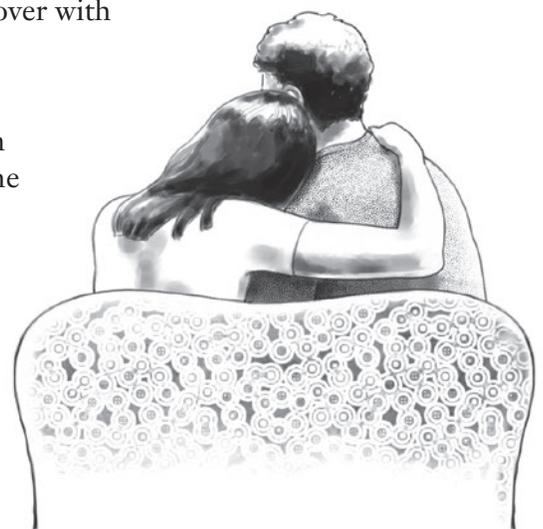
Pregnancy is a normal part of life. But it is a time when your life is changing. Although you may be happy to be pregnant, all the changes can cause stress. There's a lot to think about while you're pregnant. What will childbirth be like? Will your baby be healthy? Will you be a good mother? A good father? Will you have to move to a bigger house or apartment? Can you afford it?

Don't let things build up. Talk about your worries and take care of problems while they are still small.

Pregnancy can bring people closer than ever before. Talk things over with the ones you love.

Communication is important now, while you're pregnant. It will become even more important later, when you begin your life with a new baby. You cannot assume that you and your partner have the same feelings about parenting. For example, what do you think is more important— a happy baby or a clean house? What does your partner think? How do each of you plan to divide up the housework, the diaper changes, and earning a living?

Talk it Over



Something you need to talk about is feeding your baby. Did you know that breastfeeding has many advantages? It's the safe, natural way to feed your baby. Breast milk is the perfect food for babies. Breast milk is made to meet babies' needs and to protect them from disease and infection. See Section 4 - Breastfeeding, for more information.

Talk with the important people in your life about how you plan to feed your baby—your partner, your mother, your family or a health professional. You will need help and support as you learn to be a parent. These are the people you can depend on. Make them part of your plan.

You need to start talking about these things now. Don't wait until you have a problem before you share your feelings.

You can handle most things by talking them over with people you trust or by working them out on your own. If it becomes too much for you and you feel like there are too many problems, seek professional help or counselling.

Sexuality

As your life, body, and feelings change during pregnancy so will your sexual feelings and desires.

Is It Safe to Have Sex When You Are Pregnant?

In a healthy pregnancy, sex will not hurt the baby or the mother. Most of the time it's safe and normal to have sex.

However, your doctor may suggest that you not have intercourse:

- If the placenta is growing in the lower part of your womb (uterus) near your vagina. This is called placenta previa.
- If, in the past, you have had a problem with your cervix starting to open up too early in your pregnancy (this is called incompetent cervix).
- If you have had early labour in the past, and no one knows why
- If you have any signs that you might be going into labour too early
- If you have any signs that you might miscarry
- If your water has broken
- If you have an infection
- If your doctor suggests that you avoid intercourse, don't forget to ask when you can start again.



Sexual Feelings

It is normal for your sexual feelings—and your partner’s—to change while you are pregnant. A lot of things affect how you feel about sex. For example, you and your partner may have mixed feelings about the way the body changes during pregnancy. Many men and women think that a pregnant woman’s large breasts and round tummy are sexy and exciting. Others do not. You may find that your own feelings about your body change from day-to-day.

Do you want to have sex more, or not at all? Many women find that they are more sensitive to touch and feel very sexy when they are pregnant. Others find it more difficult to enjoy sex at this time.

The best thing to do is to talk to your partner. You need to try to understand each other’s feelings.

As your size and shape change, you might try different and more comfortable ways to have sex. Why not try new things? Let your partner know what feels good and what does not. Ask your partner to tell you what he wants and how he feels. Remember that there are many ways to show love, care, and affection that don’t involve sexual intercourse. If you or your partner do not want intercourse, find other ways to be close. Try massage, cuddles, kissing, and back rubs. Pregnant women often feel a great need to be held and cuddled. Their partners seem to like it, too.

Enjoy your pregnancy and take care of yourself. Look at it this way: taking care of yourself is good practice for taking care of your baby.

Give yourself a break:

- Make some time for yourself every day. Stretch out, relax, and think about your baby.
- Give yourself a day to read, swim, walk, or spend the day in bed.

Stay active:

- Do something physical every day. Walking, swimming—even just stretching—will help you feel better when stress builds up.

Relax

- Lie down, relax your muscles, and focus on deep and slow breathing.
- Do some of the relaxation exercises on pages 124-126 in Section 6 - Healthy Activity, every day.

*Take Time
for Yourself*

Buying for Baby

Car Seats



Although there are hundreds of things you can buy for a baby, it's good to know there are only a few that you must get. A car seat is one of them.

The law says that babies must travel in a car seat, even on the trip home from the hospital.

Even if you do not own a car, you will need a car seat when you travel in a taxi or ride with friends. You can also use an infant car seat as a baby seat in your home.

Babies must ride in a rear facing car seat until they are at least one year old and they weigh 10 kg (about 22 lb). The infant car seat must always face backwards and be kept in place with a seat belt. The safest place for a car seat is in the centre of the back seat (except if there is an armrest that folds down). Infant car seats are not safe unless they are installed and used according to the instructions that come from the company that made the seat.

Infant car seats must meet the Transport Canada's safety standards. Do not buy a car seat unless it has an instruction booklet and a National Safety Mark to show that it meets these standards. A plastic infant carrier is NOT a safe seat even if it has a seat belt.



Be careful about buying a used child seat. Make sure any child seat you buy has:

- Manufacturer's instructions
- All necessary hardware, straps, buckles, harnesses and chest clip
- Not been in a collision
- Not been recalled
- Not expired (check the expiry date, if one is not visible contact the manufacturer)
- No discolored (stress) marks or cracks and the harness is not worn or torn.

Before you buy a car seat, try it out in your car. Make sure that it fits easily into your car's seat and that your seat belts will fit around it. Check that it's easy for you to use. Read the instructions and practice.

If you have questions, call Transport Canada toll-free at 1-800-333-0371.

WARNING Do not put an infant or child car seat in front of an air bag.

Baby Furniture

You will not need a lot of baby furniture right away. The baby will need a place to sleep—a crib or bassinet. You will need a place to put baby clothes—a small chest of drawers or even a box. You do not really need a rocking chair, but many parents and babies get a lot of pleasure from one.

Any furniture you buy for the baby should be clean, safe and sturdy. Old furniture is not always safe.

Make sure that:

- All small parts are firmly in place and will not come loose
- No parts are loose, split or broken
- No hardware is missing
- There are no holes or spaces big enough to trap any part of the baby

Making sure the crib is safe

If you are buying a second-hand crib, do a very careful safety check. Used furniture does not always meet the standards set by the Canada Safety Association (CSA).

- The slats should be no more than 6 cm (2 3/8 in) apart.
- The mattress should be less than 15 cm (6 in) thick. It must be firm and should not move around. You should not be able to fit more than two fingers between the mattress and the side of the crib.
- When the side rail of the crib is up, there should be at least 66 cm (26 in) between the lowest part of the mattress support and the top of the side rail.
- The tops of the corner posts should be very small and not pointed, so children's clothing won't catch.
- The mattress supports should be firmly attached. The mattress should not come loose when you push up from under the crib, rattle the crib from side to side, or thump the mattress from top to bottom.
- The crib must have a label that says the name of the company that made it, the model number and the date it was made. It is illegal to sell cribs made before 1986, and cribs older than 10 years old should not be used.
- There should be clear, easy-to-understand directions on how to set up the crib.

WARNING

Because of the risk of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome), soft mattresses, pillows, comforters, stuffed toys, and bumper pads should not be used in cribs.

Safe Playpens

All playpens, new or used, must meet the standards of the Hazardous Products Act. These are

- Playpens should be stable and sturdy, with no more than two wheels or casters. These should both be on the same end.
- Sides should be at least 48 cm (18.9 in) high.
- If there is netting on the sides, it must be very fine mesh to keep clothing, buttons, or hooks from getting caught.
- Edges must not be rough or sharp.
- Hinges should be designed to prevent pinching or a sudden fall.
- There should be no holes that are large enough to trap tiny fingers.
- All small parts should be firmly attached.

More Information:

To find out more about buying baby clothes and toys see Section 8 - Healthy Family.

