CHILD HEALTH CARE ASSOCIATES

SAFETY INFORMATION FOR NEWBORNS

CAR INJURIES

Car crashes are a great threat to your child's life and health. Most injuries and deaths from car crashes can be prevented by the use of car safety seats. Your child, besides being much safer in a car safety seat, will behave better, so you can pay attention to your driving. Make your newborns first ride home from the hospital a safe one in a safety car seat. Your infant should ride in the back seat in a rear facing car seat. NEVER put an infant in the front seat of a car with a passenger air bag.
Make certain that your baby's car seat is installed correctly. Read and follow the instructions that come with the car safety seat and the sections in the owners' manual of your car on using safety seats correctly. Use the car safety seat EVERY time your child is in the car. If you have any questions you can contact your local police department to set up an inspection.

FALLS

Babies wiggle and move to push against things with their feet soon after they are born. Even these very first movements can result in a fall. As your baby grows and is able to roll over, he or she may fall off of things unless protected. **Do not leave your baby alone** on changing tables, beds, sofas, or chairs. Put **your baby in a safe place** such as a crib or playpen when you can not hold him.

BURNS AND FIRE

Never carry your baby and hot liquids such as coffee, or food at the same time. Your baby can get burned. You can't handle both! To protect your child from tap water scalds, reduce the maximum temperature of your hot water heater to 120 degrees F. **If your baby gets burned, immediately put the burned area in cold water. Keep the burned areas in cold water until he or she stops crying. Then cover the burn loosely with a bandage or clean cloth and call your doctor.**
To protect your baby from house fires, be sure you have a working smoke alarm in your home. Test the batteries in your smoke alarm every month to be sure they work. Change the batteries once a year on a date you'll remember, such as daylight savings time.

SMOKING

When caregivers in a household smoke, others in the house can be adversely affected. Infants and children who live in a house where someone smokes have an increased rate of all respiratory infections. Their symptoms are also more severe and last longer than those of children who live in a smoke free home. The impact of passive smoke is worse during the first five years of life when children spend most of their time with their parents. Smoking outside the house reduces these risks but remember cars and clothes can also smell of smoke and expose babies to the harmful chemicals**. Never smoke while holding your baby.** Lastly, only quitting smoking will eliminate the risk to you and your baby

CRYING

Most newborns are generally content between feedings. Initially much of this time is spent sleeping. But as they are awake for longer periods of time, they can become fussy. Crying babies usually need to be held. They need a soothing voice and soothing touch. You cannot spoil your baby in the first several

months of life by holding him too much. When babies cry often without being hungry, overheated, in pain or ill, we call it “colic”. About 10% of babies have colic. Although no one is certain what causes colic, these babies seem to want to be cuddled or not go to sleep. Colic is not the result of bad parenting or gas. Colic is not caused by abdominal pain. The reason belly muscles feel hard is that a baby uses these muscles to cry. The following soothing techniques may help fussy or colicky babies:

- Cuddling and rocking in a chair
- Swinging
- A stroller or car ride
- Loud background noise like a vacuum cleaner
- Swaddling

If at any time you are feeling so overwhelmed you may hurt your baby, please call us or a family member or a friend immediately.

DIAPER RASH

Most diaper rashes are caused by contact with moisture, bacteria and ammonia which irritate the skin. Change your baby frequently (every hour or so for the first few weeks) or as soon as you realize they have urinated or had a bowel movement. Frequent use of an inexpensive emollient like petroleum jelly works well for prevention of rashes. Once a baby has a diaper rash, a thicker cream which sticks to the skin better will work better (i.e. Desitin, Balmex). Exposure to air will also help your baby’s bottom heal more quickly. Lay him/her on an open diaper or rubber mat to play or nap for a while. If the rash is not any better after 3-4 days or looks infected (yellow pus, pimples, blisters) call our office.

SIDS

SIDS STANDS FOR Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. It is the sudden unexplained death of a baby under 1 year of age. Babies placed on their stomach to sleep are much more likely to die of SIDS than babies placed on their backs. Always place your baby on his back to sleep, even for naps. Other things you can do to make a safer environment for your baby:

- Use a firm mattress
- Do not use stuffed animals or loose bedding in crib
- Do not allow smoking around your baby
- Be sure your baby doesn’t get too warm during sleep
- Do not hold your baby while you are sleeping
- Do not allow your baby to sleep in your bed
- Do not allow your baby to sleep over night in a car seat or swing