

Use this list to help you choose and safely use baby equipment.

Bassinets

Basics

A bassinet is a basket-like product intended to provide a sleeping place for an infant. Bassinets are often made of wicker. They may also have soft or rigid sides.

Bassinets are smaller than cribs, so are typically made for babies up to the age of three months old and weighing 10 kg (22 lbs.) or less. Bassinets are also no larger than 50 cm (20 in) in width and 90 cm (35 in) in length. Whereas cradles rock back and forth, bassinets are stationary. Some bassinets come with portable frames and wheels, allowing the bassinet to be rolled from room to room. Some bassinets also come with integrated changing tables.

Choosing

Do:

- Check for a sticker that shows the bassinet meets current Canadian Safety standards.
- Choose a bassinet that is sturdy and has a wide base.
- Choose a bassinet with a product's label listing when, where, and by whom it was made.
- Choose a bassinet with slats or bars that are less than 6 cm (2 3/8 inch) apart.
- Check that mattresses and padding are firm and fit snugly.
- Mattresses for bassinets should be not more than 3.8 cm (1.5 inch) thick. Any gap at the end of a mattress should be less than 3 cm (1 3/16 inch).

Don't:

- Buy cushions, bumper pads, or quilts to put in a bassinet, they pose a suffocation risk.

Using

Do:

- Lock any wheels on a portable bassinet once the bassinet is positioned.
- Check that the legs are locked in place in folding models.
- Use a fitted sheet that fits a mattress for a bassinet.
- Check periodically that the bassinet is solid, screws or bolts are tight.
- Move your baby once your baby reaches the weight or age guidelines outlined in the products instructions. Or when your baby can roll over.

Don't:

- Place bumper pads, comforters, soft mattresses, or stuffed toys in bassinets with your baby.
- Place the bassinet near windows, curtains, blinds or extension cores, electrical plugs or lamps.
- Children can fall or become caught in cords.
- Tie Strings and ribbons on the baby, these can choke the child.
- Tie the baby in the bassinet.

Cradles

Basics

A cradle may have solid sides or sides with bars. It provides a sleeping place for a young baby. Cradles may have legs, or may have rockers so it can be rocked.

Cradles are smaller than cribs, so are made for babies about three months old. Once the baby can push up on her hands and knees or reaches the weight guideline for the cradle, she should be moved to a crib.

Choosing

Do:

- Check for a sticker that shows the bassinet meets current Canadian Safety standards.
- Choose a cradle with a product's label listing when, where, and by whom it was made.
- Choose a cradle with slats or bars that are less than 6 cm (2 3/8 inch) apart.
- Check that mattresses and padding are firm and fit snugly. Mattresses for cradles should not be more than 3.8 cm (1.5 inch) thick. Any gap at the end of a mattress should be less than 3 cm (1 3/16 inch).

Don't:

- Buy a cradle with corner posts that are more than 3 mm (1/8 inch) high.
- Buy a cradle with decorative cut-outs. A baby's hand or arm could get stuck in these.

Using

Do:

- Follow the instructions provided by the maker of the cradle.
- Check periodically that the cradle is solid, and hardware such as screws or bolts are tight.
- Check that the cradle does not have any small parts that could pose a choking risk.
- Use fitted sheets that fit the size of the cradle mattress.
- Move your baby once your baby reaches the weight or age guidelines outlined in the products instructions.
- Move your baby when he can push up on his hands and knees.

Don't:

- Place bumper pads, comforters, soft mattresses, or stuffed toys in cradle with your baby. Place the cradle near windows, curtains, blind or extension cords, electrical plugs or lamps. Children can fall out windows or become caught in cords.

Cribs

Basics

Cribs made prior to September 1986 are no longer considered safe for use. These may still be found at garage sales, flea markets, in cottages or relatives' homes. In Canada, it is illegal to sell, import or advertise these cribs. Since the end of December 2016, the sale of drop-side cribs is banned in Canada. These cribs may still be found at garage sales, flea markets or second hand stores. Cribs should have labels that show they meet Canadian safety standards and identify the maker and the date they were made.

Choosing

Do:

- Check that the space between the bars is not greater than 6 cm or 2-3/8 inches.
- Make sure any posts are not more than 1.5 mm or 1/16 inch high.
- Check the frame to make sure it is solid.
- Choose a crib with a manufacturer's label listing when, where, and by whom it was made.
- Make sure the mattress is tight against all four sides; if you can fit more than one finger between the mattress and the frame on any of the four sides, the mattress is too small.
- Make sure the mattress support is attached permanently to the frame, without S or Z-shaped hooks.
- Make sure the mattress is firm and no more than 15 cm or 6 inches thick. Replace the mattress if it is not firm or if it is worn-out.

Don't:

- Choose a crib made before September 1986; they are illegal.
- Choose a crib with drop-sides.
- Choose a crib that has loose, missing or broken parts.
- Choose a crib with corner posts that could catch on your child's clothing.
- Choose a crib without a label; they do not meet current safety standards.

Using

Do:

- Check periodically for loose screws or wobbly parts on the crib.
- Lower the mattress to its lowest level if baby can sit up or stand.
- Remove your child permanently from the crib when 90 cm tall (about 35 inches); at about this height they will be able to climb out of the crib.
- Remove toys or mobiles strung above the crib as soon as the baby can push up on his or her hands or knees.

Don't:

- Place the crib near windows, curtains, blind or extension cords, electrical plugs or lamps. Children can fall out windows or become caught in cords.
- Place soft objects like bumper pads, comforters, soft mattresses, and stuffed toys in the crib; these items can suffocate the baby.
- Tie the baby in or harness the baby to the crib.

Baby Hammocks

Baby hammocks are made of woven fabric that may be hung from a metal or wood frame. Health Canada advises parents not to use a baby hammock. A baby is at risk of rolling and becoming wedged in a position where they would be unable to breathe when these items are used. There is also the risk of falling out of the hammock.

Bedside Sleep Products

These products may look like a bassinet or cradle and can be attached next to an adult bed. They may have one open side or 4 sides with one side that opens. Health Canada advises parents not to use a bedside sleep product that has a side that can be lowered. A baby is at risk of getting trapped in the gap between their bed and the adult bed. If the fabric over the frame of the sleep product is not tight, the fabric may bunch up and pose a suffocation hazard.



- A baby should not be put to sleep in a playpen; these were not designed as a place for baby to sleep.
- Do not let your baby sleep in a stroller, car seat, baby carrier, swing, or sling. A sleeping baby's head can fall forward and constrict their airway. Always move your sleeping baby to a safe place to sleep.
- Do not use bumper pads or sleep positioners. These items can pose a suffocation hazard.

Sleepwear

Clothing for babies is made in a wide range of fabrics. Choose fabric for your baby that will not catch fire or burn quickly. Synthetic fabrics such as nylon and polyester are harder to catch fire and burn more slowly than cotton or rayon.

Choose tight-fitting sleepwear for your baby. Sleepers or polo pyjamas are less likely to catch fire than nightgowns, or wide-legged pyjamas. Bathrobes or nightgowns should be made of slow burning fabric.

Baby Carriers

Basics

Baby carriers come in three types: front carriers, slings, and backpacks. Choosing one depends on the age and weight of the child, and the type of activity for which the carrier will be used. Each type has advantages and disadvantages.

Front carriers consist of two shoulder straps supporting a deep fabric seat.

Slings are wide swaths of fabric worn across the adult's torso and supported by a single shoulder strap. Slings that use knots or rings pose a safety risk, a baby could fall or slip if the knot unties or the fabric slips through the ring.

Backpacks are similar to camping-style backpacks, but have a seat for your baby instead of a storage compartment for gear. Most are supported by a lightweight aluminum frame to distribute the child's weight evenly across the carrier's shoulders and hips.

Choosing

Do:

- Choose one appropriate to the age and size of your baby and the person that will be using it.
- Consider the purpose, how long it will be used.
- Choose a carrier that is comfortable for baby and that supports the baby securely. Leg holes should be banded with elastic or padded fabric, and a padded headrest should be included. The harness, belts, buckles, straps and seat should be secure and in good working order.
- Choose one with removable fabric for washing; all fabric should be durable and easy to clean.
- Try wearing the carrier in store before buying it.
- Check whether it is comfortable and easy to put on and take off.
- Choose a carrier with reflective strips so you can be easily seen in the late afternoon or evening. You could add your own reflective strips if the carrier does not come with them.
- Choose a backpack with a safety harness that clasps across your baby's chest and over his shoulders.
- Choose a backpack with an adjustable inside seat, so it can continue to be used as your baby grows.
- Choose a backpack that has an extension that will help hold it upright. This is useful when you need to tend to your baby, such as adjusting their toques, or when easing them out of their harness, if they fall asleep.

Don't:

- Choose a carrier or backpack that takes two adults to load; slipping the carrier or backpack on and off easily is important.

Baby Carriers (continued)

Using

Do:

- Follow the instructions for the carrier that are found in the user manual.
- Check the carrier periodically for ripped seams, missing or loose fasteners, and frayed seats or straps; repair them as needed or dispose of the carrier.
- Use the safety straps every time when using a baby carrier.
- Keep all baby carriers on the floor; babies can rock or be tipped off raised surfaces.
- Be cautious when leaning over, hold onto your baby and bend at the knees to prevent your baby from falling or slipping out of the sling or carrier.
- Follow the viewable and kissable guide:
 - Baby's face is in view
 - Baby is positioned high and upright
 - Baby's chin is up
 - Baby is supported and snug
 - Baby is close and kissable.

Don't:

- Leave the baby unattended in the baby carrier.
- Place slings and carriers under outdoor clothing and zip or button clothing shut. Baby may suffocate.
- If using a sling, bend over from the waist as baby may fall out.



Premature babies, babies under 4 months or with some medical conditions may be a greater risk of suffocation. Use caution when using a carrier with this type of baby.

Car Seats

Basics

Car crashes are the number one cause of death and injury for Canadian children. Ensure your child's safety by choosing the right type of car seat for the age, height and weight of the child.

Car seats come in three main types. Choosing one depends on the age, height and weight of the child.

Rear-facing seats provide newborns, infants, toddlers and children up to 20 kg (45 lbs) special protection. Rear-facing infant car seats are used for infants weighing up to 10 kg (22 lbs). There are rear-facing car seats made for toddlers and children weighing up to 20 kg (45 lbs). Transport Canada and Safe Kids Canada recommends keeping children in rear-facing seats for as long as possible until they grow out of them.

Forward-facing seats are for older children with stronger back and neck muscles. These seats are for children from 10 kg to 30 kg (45-65 lbs). Transport Canada and Safe Kids Canada recommends keeping older children in rear-facing seats for as long as possible until they grow out of them.

Booster seats raise children up off the back seat of the vehicle to position them properly in adult seatbelts. They are usually used for children from 4 to 9 years, weighing at least 18 kg (40 lbs) and meeting the height guidelines for the booster seat. Transport Canada recommends keeping older children in booster seats until they exceed the height and weight restrictions for the booster seat. The car's lap belts can be used once your child has exceeded the height and weight guidelines for the booster seat.

In many provinces and states, it is mandatory for anyone transporting a young child to make sure the child is properly secured in the correct seat. This law applies not only to parents, but also to relatives and caregivers, such as nannies and babysitters. Learn what the provincial and states rules are in your area.

Car Seats (continued)

Choosing

Do:

- Check that the car seat has a label that shows it meets Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards; car seats that are made in the United States may not meet Canadian Motor Check the car seat expiry date.
- Check the store's return policy; it is important to know that you can return the seat if you are unhappy with it for any reason.
- Choose a car seat that is compatible with your car; ask to check the fit of any floor models in your own car, and if purchasing a seat after your baby is born bring your baby to test car seats prior to purchase.
- Choose a car seat with removable, washable fabric, for ease in cleaning.
- Choose the right type of car seat according to province or state rules.
- Check the car seat expiry date.

Don't:

- Choose a car seat that is not labeled for use in your country.
- Choose a second-hand car seat unless you have the instructions and know that it has not been in a crash or been recalled; it should have all the parts and a label that says it meets Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards.

Using

Do:

- Make sure the car seat is properly installed by following the manufacturer's instructions closely. Safe Kids Canada reports that 4 out of 5 car seats are not installed correctly.
- Send in the registration card or warranty card; you should be notified if the car seat is recalled.
- Check that your car seat has not expired and replace it prior to this date.
- Check, the seat every time you use it; the seat should not move more than 2.5 cm (1 inch) in any direction.
- Replace your car seat if you have been involved in a crash; your baby's seat could have been damaged in the collision.
- Place a child in their car seat in the back seat of your car, away from air bags.
- Keep your child in the appropriate car seat for as long as possible.
- Move them when they exceed the height and weight guides found in your car seat manual
- When using car seats in your home:
 - Keep car seats on the floor; babies can rock themselves off raised or soft surfaces, or the car seat can be knocked over accidentally.
 - Keep the car seat's straps on when moving your baby indoors. Monitor your baby when in the car seat indoors.

Don't:

- Lend, sell, or give away car seats or booster seats made before January 1, 2012 they do not meet new Canadian Safety Standards and the Product Safety Act.
- Use a car seat as a crib; babies have died after slipping and becoming tangled in car seat straps.

Strollers

Basics

For many parents a stroller is a necessary piece of baby equipment. They come in many varieties and for many purposes, such as traditional strollers for everyday use, lightweight strollers for travelling, rugged strollers for uneven terrains, and jogging strollers for combining exercise with daily childcare duties. Strollers are also available for families with more than one baby.

Strollers are popular baby gifts and shower presents, but they are highly personal buying decisions, like buying a car. If you are buying a stroller for someone else, ask for that person's choice of stroller. One way to help those who want to buy a stroller for you is to register for it at a department or baby store. Strollers are used on an everyday basis, and the person using it should love the one they own.

Choosing

Do:

- Choose a stroller that best meets your needs: Does it need to be portable, lightweight, have big wheels, and be used for jogging or able to carry more than one baby.
- Choose a stroller that was made before 1985 when the safety rules changed.
- Choose a stroller that allows newborns to lie on their backs; or an older baby to sit upright.
- Choose a stroller that has safety straps that include a strap for the waist and a crotch strap that fits between your child's legs.
- Choose a stroller that is sturdy and right for your child's weight; check the weight recommendations provided by the company.
- Check that the stroller's brakes work properly and the wheels are attached firmly.
- Check that a portable stroller has locks to stop it from folding when the child is in it.
- Check that the stroller has a label that names the maker, where and date it was made.
- Choose a stroller with a basket underneath to carry bags or heavy purses.

Using

Do:

- Follow the product instructions all the time.
- Use the safety belts and harness every time your baby is in the stroller.
- Return the stroller warranty card so you can be notified of a recall or contacted by the company if you move.
- Keep the child away from the stroller when you are folding and unfolding it to avoid pinched fingers.
- Use the stroller's brakes every time you stop your stroller, especially on an incline.
- Check, the size of any toys that come attached to the tray of a stroller; make sure their size does not present a choking hazard, and that they are securely fastened.
- Check the stroller regularly for signs of damage, lose or broken parts.
- Follow height and weight guidelines found in the user manual.

Don't:

- Leave a child unattended in a stroller.
- Hang heavy purses or other bags on strollers, these may cause the stroller to tip over
- Place pillows, quilts or blankets in the stroller, they may pose a suffocation risk.
- Leave your baby in the stroller to sleep.

Baby Bath Tubs

Basics

Portable baby bathtubs can make bathing a baby easier and more fun for both parents and the baby. They can be placed in a sink, in a regular bathtub, on a counter or kitchen table or even on the floor.

Choosing

Do:

- Choose a baby bathtub with an internal slip-resistant mesh sling or cradle or contoured design to keep baby in a safe position and prevents baby from slipping.
- Choose a baby bathtub with a smooth, overhanging rim to allow for easier carrying.
- Choose a baby bathtub that has a large drain with an attached plug for quick emptying.

Don't:

- Choose a bath seat, or bath rings, these are not recommended by Health Canada as drownings have occurred with these items.

Using

Do:

- Stay with the child at all times; a baby can drown in as little as 2.5 cm (1 inch) of water.
- Always keep a hand on your baby at all times to keep your baby safe.
- Turn off the hot water first when filling the bathtub, and make sure that the baby does not touch the hot water tap.
- Swirl the water with your hand before placing the baby in the bathtub; this will even out any hot spots of water.
- Test the water's temperature before placing the baby in the bathtub; the water should feel warm, not hot.
- Set the temperature on your hot water heater so the hot water is less than 49°C (102°F).

Change Tables

Basics

Change tables, are a convenient place to dress or diaper babies. Most change tables stand at a comfortable level for the diaper changer. They are equipped with shelves or drawers to store diapers, wipes, ointment and toys within easy reach.

Each year, however, babies are injured when they fall from the table. An active baby can roll over and fall from a change table in the few seconds it takes for a parent to reach for a diaper. Consider putting baby on a change pad on the floor.

Choosing

Do:

- Choose a change table that has a sturdy base to keep the table from tipping; change tables that are wide and lower to the ground are sturdier than those with higher, narrow bases.
- Choose a change table with drawers or shelves to make it easy to reach items like towels and diapers.
- Choose a change table with restraining straps, or restraining barriers on all four sides.

Don't:

- Choose a removable change table that sits on top of a regular dresser, unless you are prepared to screw the change table on to the top of the dresser.

Using

Do:

- Keep all change items right beside you; if you need to get something that is out of reach, take your child with you.
- Keep one hand on the baby at all times when changing. Use the safety straps at all, times when your baby is on the table.

Don't:

- Allow other children to climb the change table by using the table's shelves or drawers.
- Leave your child alone on a change table, even if he or she is strapped on.

High Chairs

Basics

High chairs have a frame of molded plastic or metal tubing and a seat with a safety belt and footrest. Safety straps include waist and crotch harness straps, and if a tray is used, there should be a passive restraint, such as a crotch post, used in conjunction with the harness straps. Stable, sturdy models that can stand kicking, spilling and regular cleaning for at least a year are best.

Choosing

Do:

- Choose a high chair that is sturdy, easily cleaned with adjustable seat heights that can be changed as your baby grows.
- Choose a high chair that with a wide base to prevent it from tipping over.
- Portable high chairs should lock securely when set up.
- Choose a high chair with a tray that can be released with one hand.
- Check the underside of the feeding tray for rough or sharp edges that could rub or hurt your baby.
- Check for loose or absent small parts; missing small parts can make the chair unstable, or if loose, can become choking hazards.

Using

Do:

- Always use the safety seat and harness every time your child is in the seat.
- Keep high chairs away from tables, counters or walls; children can push against these while seated and topple their high chair.
- Keep your child's high chair away from windows, blind cords, stoves or other electrical appliances.
- Make sure the tray is always locked into place.
- Teach your child not to stand up in high chairs; standing can cause a high chair to topple over.
- Watch your child closely when he or she is in the high chair.

Don't:

- Let older children climb onto the high chair while your baby is in it; the high chair could tip over.

Hook on Chairs

Basics

Hook-on chairs attach to the edge of a table, and consist of a seat and sometimes an adjustable feeding tray.

Choosing

Do:

- Check the instructions before purchasing; not all tables are suitable for attaching hook-on chairs.
- Choose a hook-on chair that includes a waist strap and a crotch strap that fits between the child's legs.
- Check the underside of the feeding tray for rough or sharp edges that could irritate or hurt the child.

Don't:

- Choose a hook-on chair without testing its harness straps; try opening and closing the strap with one hand to make sure it is easy to use.

Using

Do:

- Before putting a child in a hook-on chair, attach it to the table and pull it backwards to make sure it will not topple.
- Place the hook-on chair so your child's feet cannot push on the table or other chairs. Use safety straps—including the crotch strap—at all times when using a hook-on chair.

Don't:

- Leave your child unattended in a hook-on chair.

Activity Centres

Basics

Stationary activity centers are made of molded plastic, with a circular frame, a rotating, high-backed seat recessed in the center, and a surrounding flat tray with a variety of attached toys. They can be adjusted to different heights to grow with the child. Babies can use them as soon as they can sit up unassisted (age 4–6 months) until they are about 12 months old.

The activity centre allows your child to stand with support, making children taller and more stable than they really are. This means they can reach up and out to grab at things they would not normally be able to reach.

Choosing

Do:

- Choose a centre according to your baby's age and weight.
- Choose an activity center that is sturdy, with a solid, flat base and a seat that swivels smoothly.
- Choose an activity centre with comfortable, soft fabric edging on the sides and legs of the seat cushions.
- Choose an activity centre with well-designed, well-secured toys for little hands.
- Consider that used activity centers may no longer meet current safety standards.

Don't:

- Use activity centers with any sharp edges or with rough areas under the tray.

Using

Do:

- Keep the activity centre away from areas where the child could fall or be accidentally struck, such as stairs, doors and windows.
- Check the toys on the activity centre before placing your baby in the centre; make sure the toys are not broken, loose or sharp.
- Keep the activity centre away from furniture with sharp corners such as coffee tables.

Don't:

- Leave a child alone in an activity centre.

Bouncer Seats

Basics

Bouncer seats—also known as “bouncy seats”—are springy, reclining seats that may help keep your baby relaxed and amused. They have a semi-upright tilt that offers the baby a view of his surroundings.

Bouncer seats are built with a lightweight frame made from metal wire, tubular metal, or heavy-gauge plastic. Most are curved on the bottom to allow the seat to rock. The reclining seat is a soft, removable, washable pad that conforms to the baby’s spine. They are typically used during the baby’s first five or six months.

Bouncer seats are typically meant for indoor use, some models may come with features that allow them to be used outdoors. These may include mosquito or bug netting, and a folding canopy that acts as a sunshade.

Choosing

Do:

- Choose a bouncer seat that is appropriate for the age and weight of your baby. Usually seats usually fit a newborn to an infant of 9 to 14 kg (20 to 30 lbs).
- Choose a bouncer seat with a base or rear support that is wide and sturdy to prevent the seat from tipping.
- Choose a bouncer seat with rubber pads or other non-skid surfaces on the bottom.
- Choose a bouncer seat with removable and washable upholstery for easy cleaning.
- Choose a seat that will bounce easily with when your baby is seated in it.
- Test any toys attached to a toy bar on the bouncer seat to make sure they are durable and firmly attached.
- Test the stability of the model in the store before purchasing.

Using

Do:

- Supervise your baby while they are in the seat.
- Follow the product instructions when using the seat. Always use the seat belt restraints every time the seat is used.
- Stop using the bouncer seat when your baby reaches the maximum weight allowed or when your baby can sit unassisted.
- Move your baby to a crib, bassinet or cradle if baby falls asleep in the bouncer seat.

Don't:

- Place a bouncer seat on an elevated surface such as a table or counter; always place the bouncer seat on the floor.

Doorway Jumpers

Basics

These may be called doorway jumpers, baby exercisers or baby bouncers. All have a seat or harness that hang from the top of a doorframe or from a freestanding frame. Bungee-style cords or springs hang attach the seat or harness to the frame. The seat or harness is usually removable and washable. Some feature support bars in the front and back of the seat, while others have solid, molded frames contoured to encircle the baby. Adjustable straps are used to keep the seat at the child's 'jumping height'-your baby's toes should just touch the floor.

Choosing

Do:

- Choose a jumper according to the weight and age of your baby.
- Check that doorway jumpers will work with the types of doorframes in your home. Not all doorframes can support a doorway jumper.
- Consider other alternatives to a doorway jumper, such as bouncer seat and swings, that offer the baby similar fun.

Using

Do:

- Check the jumper seat, harness, cords or springs are in good working order prior to using the seat.
- Limit baby's jumping time to 10-15 minutes and listen to your baby's cues.
- Check that baby's toes just touch the floor when they are not jumping.
- Supervise your baby at all times while they are jumping.
- Stop using the jumper once your baby has reached the maximum weight or is able to walk on their own.
- Follow the maker's instructions when setting up and using the jumper.
- Check that the straps are fastened each time the baby is placed in the jumper.

Don't:

- Leave a child unattended in a doorway jumper.
- Use a doorway jumper that does not match its intended doorframe.

Swings

Basics

Baby swings are designed for indoor use and can be handy for soothing crying babies or to entertain a baby.

A baby should never be left for long periods of time in a baby swing; they should be moved to their crib if they fall asleep.

Baby swings come in two types; they consist of a seat that is suspended by a pair of arms attached to a frame with wide-standing, tubular-metal legs. They can be moved from one room to another. Windup models provide 20 to 30 minutes of motion after being wound with a handle located at the top or side of the swing. Battery-operated models are driven by a motor that runs on D batteries and may have settings for different speeds.

Choosing

Do:

- Decide prior to purchase what type of swing you would prefer.
- Choose a baby swing with a crotch post, safety belt and a padded seat cover that can be cleaned.
- Opt for a baby swing with a wide, sturdy base that folds or dismantles easily for storage.
- Test a swing in the store or at a friend's or relatives with your baby to decide whether your baby likes swinging.
- Testing the swing allows you to check the noise levels and its sturdiness.

Don't:

- Choose a baby swing with more than four speeds; the faster speeds may upset some babies.

Using

Do:

- Follow the product's age and weight guidelines and operating instructions.
- Limit the time the baby swings; swinging for long periods can make the baby dizzy or nauseous.
- Start with the lowest swing setting on all battery-powered swings; then increase the speed based on your baby's cues.
- High settings may be too rough, especially at the beginning of the swing.
- Always use the safety belt when your baby is in the seat.
- If baby falls asleep in the swing, gently move them to a crib, bassinet or cradle to sleep.

Don't:

- Leave your baby unattended in a baby swing.

Playpens

Basics

Playpens and play yards provide babies with an enclosed space for playing. Playpens are usually stationary, whereas play yards are designed for portability, whether that means moving them within the home or folding them for travel. Some play yards also feature change tables, bassinets, and an overall playpen.

Choosing

Do:

- Choose a playpen that is based on the age and weight of your baby and how it will be used.
- Choose a playpen with a maker's label listing when, where, and by whom it was made.
- Choose a playpen that is based on the age and weight of your baby and how it will be used.
- Check the floor pad; it should be no thicker than 2.5 cm (1 inch), snug fitting and firm.
- Choose a playpen with top rails that lock automatically when lifted to set up the playpen.
- Choose a playpen that has a mesh or mosquito-type netting; the openings in the mesh should not be bigger than 6 millimeters or ¼ inch.

Don't:

- Choose playpens that have large openings; the mesh can catch onto buttons or hooks on the child's clothing.
- Pick playpens that have sharp points, uncovered hinges or loose parts.

Using

Do:

- Make sure the sides are securely locked in the upright position before putting baby in the playpen.
- Remove any bibs, before placing the baby in the playpen; these items may become caught on parts of the playpen and choke the baby.
- Remove toys strung across the playpen as soon as the baby can push up on his hands or knees; they may become caught in these toys.
- Use only the mattress pad that comes with the playpen; the mattress pad should fit tightly in the playpen.
- Place playpen away from stairs, doors or appliances.
- If the playpen has a bassinet, remove the bassinet before placing baby in the playpen.

Don't:

- Use the playpen as a place for baby to sleep. It was not designed to be a safe sleep environment.
- Add an extra mattress to a playpen; the baby can be trapped between the mattress and sides.
- Leave a baby in a playpen with a side down.
- Leave a baby unattended in a playpen.
- Put large stuffed toys, pillows, bumper pads and thick comforters in the playpen; these items may pose a risk of suffocation.
- Use a playpen or yard once the child first attempts to climb out.

Toy Boxes

Basics

Toy boxes and chests are a convenient way of keeping bedrooms and play rooms tidy. They can present risks to children. Children have been hurt when the lids have fallen on tiny fingers or heads, others have become trapped inside.

ALL toy boxes and chests must have holes to prevent child suffocation. If a box or chest does not have holes, drill large holes yourself or consider removing the lid from the chest or box.

Choosing

Do:

- Choose a toy box or chest that has a lightweight lid or no lid.
- Choose a toy box or chest that has a spring-loaded hinge that will hold the lid in any position.
- Choose a toy box or chest with holes in the side or front, so that a child trapped inside can still breathe.
- Place toy boxes and chests away from windows, blinds or appliances.

Using

Do:

- Drill holes in the top or sides of a toy box or chest to prevent suffocation of a trapped child.
- Test the lid of a toy box or chest to make sure it can be opened from the inside.
- Inspect the toy box or chest regularly to make sure the hinges are secure and well-maintained.
- Remove the lid of the toy box or chest if it does not have a spring-loaded hinge.

Baby Walkers

Canada became the first country to ban the sale, advertising and import of baby walkers. It is also illegal in Canada to sell baby walkers at garage sales, flea markets, or on street corners.

Falls down stairs in baby walkers were the greatest cause of serious head injuries for Canadian children under the age of two. Furthermore, babies in walkers can move quickly, run into hidden dangers, bump into furniture, pull on hanging appliance cords, and tip over. For these reasons baby walkers were prohibited. Health Canada recommends that if you have a baby walker, destroy it. It is illegal. Throw it away so it cannot be used again.

Baby Monitors

Basics

Baby monitors allow parents and caregivers to watch or listen to a **sleeping** child when they are not in the same room. They should not be used to leave a playing child alone. Baby monitors are not medical devices. They should not be used in place of prescribed heart or breathing monitors or to prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

For some parents, the ability to watch or hear their child at all times is comforting; for others, non-stop monitoring may not be needed or may increase a parent's anxiety.

Baby monitors come in two basic types: audio and video. Video monitors use a small mounted camera mounted in one area to transmit images and sound to a TV-like monitor in another room. Audio monitors operate within a selected radio frequency and similarly transmit sound.

Choosing

Do:

- Consider your home and lifestyle- some monitors offer two receivers, some come with clip-on belt; some are water-resistant for monitoring while showering or bathing; some feature an intercom or finder detector. If your home or apartment is small, you may be able to hear your baby without the use of a monitor.
- Choose between audio/video and audio only; monitors come with many features at different prices, but the choice between listening and watching will be your first choice.
- Choose a monitor that allows the user to change frequencies to reduce interference. Look for Digital Enhanced Cordless Technology (DECT) as this will help reduce interference.
- Choose a monitor with an appropriate signal range for the home. Choose one that has a different frequency from your cordless phone or other wireless products in your home.
- Choose digital over analog monitors. Digital monitors encode the signal so the sounds or images are only seen by you.
- Check the return policy; monitors are often not available for testing in stores.

Don't:

- Expect the audio monitor to be free of static.

Using

Do:

- Follow the instructions in the user manual.
- Place audio monitors away from devices such as a cordless phone; these devices create static.
- Try changing the operating frequency band to reduce interference.

Don't:

- Use a monitor to keep tabs on your baby when awake. The only time to use the monitor is when your baby is asleep.

Baby Gates

Basics

Baby gates are used to keep children away from stairs, areas of the home or pets. There are two types of gates: hardware-mounted gates and pressure-mounted gates.

Hardware-mounted gates are attached permanently to the wall or doorframe by screws. They are the more secure choice, although no gate can be guaranteed to keep a child in or out. This is the only type of gate that is safe to use at the tops and bottoms of stairs.

Pressure-mounted gates stay in place by using a pressure bar that fits against the doorframe. Pressure-mounted gates can be easily moved from one place to another; are easy to install, and are useful in keeping a child out of an area such as between two rooms. They **should not be used at the top or bottom of the stairs**.

Choosing

Do:

- Choose a gate that you can test in the store; make sure they are easy for you to open and close.
- Choose the correct gate for the age of your child and depending where it will be used in your home.

Don't:

- Choose diamond or "V" shaped openings; these gates were made before 1990 and are unsafe.

Using

Do:

- Follow the instructions, which come with the gate when installing and using the gate.
- Install pressure-mounted gates with the pressure bar on the side away from your child this will prevent your child from standing on the pressure bar to climb over the gate.
- Install a hardware-mounted gate so that it will only swing open away from the stairs.
- Teach others including older siblings to always lock the gate.
- Check the gate frequently for loose parts and to be sure, it is firmly in place.

Don't:

- Leave less than 5 cm (2 inches) space between the floor and the bottom of the gate; this prevents your child from slipping underneath the gate.
- Use a baby gate once the child reaches 2 years, or when the top of the gate is at his chin.
- Use a pressure gate at the top of stairs; use only hardware-mounted gates, secured by plates and screws, at the tops of stairs.

Last Updated: January 2017