

# Babies from birth to crawling

## Birth - 9 months



### Skills Your Baby is Learning

Every baby develops at their own pace, usually through similar stages. Babies will wriggle and squirm from birth, can roll over as early as 4 months, start to sit up at about 6 months and crawl at about 9 months. They will also start to reach and grab for objects and put them into their mouths. Understanding your baby's development as they grow will help you keep them safe.

### Common Causes of Injury

**Baby walkers** from crashing, falling and pulling things down on themselves as they have more reach.

**Burns** from hot water in baths, sinks and hot food and drinks.

**Choking** on hard foods and small items.

**Drowning** in baths, pools, spas, ponds, buckets and pet water bowls.

**Falling** out of high chairs, prams and strollers.

**Poisoning** from medicines, cleaning chemicals, personal hygiene products and alcohol. Accidental overdosing is one of the most common causes of poisoning

**Rolling** off change tables, benches and beds.



### Bathing

Never leave a baby unattended, or take your eyes off them, when they are near water. They must always be within arms reach.

Have everything you will need within arm's reach so you never have to turn or move away from a baby in the bath. Place a non-slip mat in the bottom of the bath to avoid baby slipping.

Always check the water temperature before placing your baby in the bath. The temperature should be no more than 38 degrees to avoid a scald injuries.

When filling the bath, run the cold water first, then hot, then cold again and mix well. This is to keep the tap cold to touch and the water temperature even.

Check that hot water is delivered at a maximum of 50 degrees in the kitchen and bathroom. Water at higher temperatures can quickly scald babies' sensitive skin.

### Sleeping

Always place babies on their back to sleep with their feet at the bottom of the cot. Keep all toys, padding, pillows and bumpers out of cots and portacots. Do not put baby in a pram to sleep unsupervised as there is a risk of smothering. Check the Red Nose website for safe sleeping advice: [rednose.org.au](http://rednose.org.au)

Ensure portacots are set up correctly with all rails and the cot base locked in securely following the manufacturers instructions. Only use cots and portacots that meet Australian Standards (Cots - AS/NZS 2172, Portacots - AS/NZS 2195).

Position the cot away from windows and curtain cords and ensure all blind or curtain cords are out of reach and secured safely with safety devices.

Remove bibs and pacifier cords/ribbons before putting baby down to sleep

Bed sharing with babies or toddlers is not recommended. It is difficult to apply safe sleeping guidelines, and babies can be injured by rolling out of bed or by adults rolling on top of them.



### Food and Drinks

Never hold babies and hot drinks at the same time. If spilt on a baby hot drinks can cause severe scalds and burns. Hot drinks, food and oil are the biggest cause of burns and scalds leading to hospitalisation for babies.

Never prop a bottle for a baby to feed alone and always supervise babies and toddlers when eating or being fed.

Always use a high chair with a 5 point harness and keep it away from anything baby can use to push against.

When bottle feeding, check the milk-temperature before giving it to a baby. Microwave ovens heat unevenly so make sure you stir food and shake bottles to mix contents before feeding.

Contact your MACH nurse for feeding advice when starting solids

Read medication labels carefully and never give more than the recommended dose. Make sure to write down dose amount and time for when medication is given to avoid overdose

### First Aid for Burns

The correct first aid for a burn is cooling immediately with cool running tap water for a minimum of 20 minutes. Do not use iced water, ice, butter or oil.

## Out and About

Use a child car seat or carrier that is correctly fitted, less than 10 years old, hasn't been in a crash and meets the requirements of the Australia/New Zealand Standard (AS/NZS 1754).

By law, babies must stay in a rear-facing child car seat until they are at least 6 months of age. The safest option is to keep babies rear-facing until at least 12 months and for as long as possible, until they no longer fit (up to 3-4 years of age).

Make sure the seat is installed correctly to your vehicle and that the harness is adjusted to fit baby each time you travel.

Never leave babies alone or unsupervised in the car. The temperature inside your car can increase by more than 30 degrees within fifteen minutes. When you leave your car, take all children with you - even for small errands and even when you are parked in the shade.

Always use harnesses in prams, strollers and supermarket trolleys and adjust them to fit baby every time. Use a Standards Approved pram (AS/NZS 2088) and place all bags under the pram to avoid it overbalancing.

Be aware that little fingers can become trapped in hinges of prams, strollers and doors.

Protect your baby from the sun by dressing them in light-weight, long sleeved clothing and a hat, find shade and use baby sunscreen ([www.sunsmart.com.au](http://www.sunsmart.com.au)).

## At Play

Make sure there is a safe area away from heaters, stairs, pets, doors and other hazards for babies to play.

Keep play areas clear of small items, anything smaller than a ping pong ball is a choking hazard.

After every use, empty any portable pools, buckets, buns and other containers that can hold water. Store them upside down or on their side so they cannot collect water if it rains.

Ensure that your pool or spa is properly fenced. Your local council can advise you on the regulations that govern pools and spas in your area.

Place secure lids on nappy buckets and store them up high to avoid poisoning and drowning.

Keep handbags (both yours and visitors) up high out of reach.

Store all medications, cleaning products and other poisonous substances out of reach of children. A cupboard located at least 1.5m from the ground and with a child-proof latch is best.

Baby walkers are not recommended as they pose a risk of severe injury.

Bouncers and rockers should be placed on the floor, never on a raised surface.

Always supervise children and babies around animals, and separate them at feeding time.

## For More Information

**Kidsafe ACT** (02) 6290 2244  
[www.kidsafeact.com.au](http://www.kidsafeact.com.au)

**Red Nose** 1300 998 698  
[rednose.org.au](http://rednose.org.au)

**Cancer Council - SunSmart** 13 11 20  
[www.sunsmart.com.au](http://www.sunsmart.com.au)

**ACT Fire and Rescue** (02) 6205 2927  
[esa.act.gov.au/fire-rescue](http://esa.act.gov.au/fire-rescue)

**Poisons Information Line** 131 126

**St Johns Ambulance First Aid Course** 1300 360 455  
[stjohnact.com.au](http://stjohnact.com.au)

**Royal Life Saving Society** (02) 6260 5800  
[www.royallifesaving.com.au](http://www.royallifesaving.com.au)

**Access Canberra** 13 22 81  
[www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au](http://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au)

**ACCC** 1300 302 502  
[www.accc.gov.au](http://www.accc.gov.au)  
[www.productsafety.gov.au](http://www.productsafety.gov.au)

**National Burns Awareness Month**  
[kidsafe.com.au/national-burns-awareness-month](http://kidsafe.com.au/national-burns-awareness-month)



## Nappy changes and dressing

Never leave babies alone on the change table, bench or bed. This includes turning away. Always have everything within reach and use any harness straps available.

Do not dress babies in clothing with long drawstrings, ribbons or cords that could cause strangulation or choking.

Choose clothing that has low fire danger. Look for LOW FIRE DANGER labels on all clothing and nightwear.

## Toys

Toys need to be age appropriate, durable and washable. Make sure they have smooth edges and no small parts that can fall off and be swallowed. Ensure toys meet the Australian Standard (AS/NZ 8124).

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