

## New Babies Birth to 6 months

### Background

**Babies learn new skills quickly! – You need to be one step ahead.**

During the first months of life, most babies learn to:

- Wiggle and roll over
- Kick and push
- Put things in their mouths

New babies need special protection from:

- Falling off a bed, sofa, cot, or change table
- Choking on small objects
- Scalds
- Drowning
- Injuries from riding in the car

If you know what your baby can do at each stage of development, you can help keep your baby safe.

### Safety Check

- ✓ Install smoke alarms (test them regularly and change the battery on 1<sup>st</sup> April every year).
- ✓ Make sure baby equipment meets Australian Standards. This includes cots, prams/joggers, toys, car seats and high chairs. Make sure second hand products are in good condition and suitable for use.
- ✓ Do not hold your baby while you are eating or drinking anything hot.
- ✓ Always use a correctly fitted child car restraint suitable for your child's age, weight and stage of development. Buckle up: every child – every trip.

### Safety Tips

#### BURNS AND SCALDS

##### Baby food

It is not a good idea to use a microwave to heat a baby bottle or baby food. Food or drinks may feel fine on the outside but they will be very hot on the inside. Always shake the bottle or stir the food before you give it to your baby and check the temperature first.

Bottles with plastic liners can explode. Do not heat them in the microwave.

##### Hot food and Drinks

Do not hold your baby while you are eating or drinking anything hot.

Use a cup with a lid for all hot drinks.

### Bath time

Hot bath water can burn your baby. Always test the temperature with your hand before you put the baby in the bath. It should feel warm, not hot. Run cold water first, then hot until you get the right temperature. Run cold water at the end to cool off the spout.

Check that the delivery temperature of hot water in your home is set to a maximum 50 degrees Celsius.



At 60 degrees a full thickness scald happens in less than a second, at 50 degrees it takes 5 minutes. Hot tap water can burn your baby.

### CHOKING AND SUFFOCATION

Put your baby to sleep on his or her back. Follow the safe sleeping guidelines for setting up your cot recommended by SIDS & KIDS [www.rednose.org](http://www.rednose.org).

Do not use a pillow for your baby. It could smother him or her.

Keep small objects such as coins or buttons out of your baby's reach. Teach older children to keep small toys away from babies.

Avoid ties or ribbons on baby clothes or toys. Never leave your baby alone with a bib tied around his or her neck. Do not attach dummies to babies with strings or cords.

When your baby begins to eat solid foods, make sure you give only very small pieces. Grate, blend, mash, or chop the food into very small pieces before you give it to your baby.



Check dummies and bottle teats regularly. Make sure the nipple part is firmly attached to the mouth shield. If it is not, the soft part could come off, causing your baby to choke.

Throw out the dummy when the nipple part has cracks or when it becomes sticky.

## POISONING

Keep poisons out of your baby's reach. This includes medicines, cleaning products, cigarettes, and alcohol.

If your doctor has said to give medicine to your baby, check the label and measure the medicine carefully every time you give it to your baby.

## CAR SAFETY

Your baby needs a car seat every time you ride in the car. Never hold your baby on your lap.

In the NT it is now illegal for a child under 7 years of age to occupy the front passenger seat of a vehicle with two or more rows of seats.

Read your car seat instructions carefully. They show you how to use the car seat correctly.

All infant and toddler restraints used in Australia require the use of an upper anchorage or tether strap – ensure you know where to find your vehicle anchorage points by referring to your vehicle owners handbook.

### Fitting your Child Car Restraint

If you need help fitting your child car restraint or advice on which restraint will suit your vehicle and individual needs contact Kidsafe NT ph: 8941 8234 for more information.

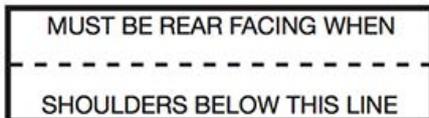
### Children under 6 months

As per the Northern Territory legislation, children from birth to the age of 6 months must use an Australian Approved Standards child restraint that is:

- rearward facing
- correctly fitted to the vehicle
- properly adjusted to fit the child's body

### Best Practice Recommendation:

Keep your baby in a rearward-facing restraint until they reach the child restraint height marker specific to the child restraint in use.



### Use either:

- Infant Carrier/Capsule
- A Convertible restraint in rearward facing mode



Infant Carrier/Capsule



Rearward Facing Convertible Child Car Restraint

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## FALLS

Keep one hand on your baby during nappy changes. This will keep him or her from rolling off the bed or change table. Keep nappies and clothing within easy reach of the changing area.

Make sure the sides of the cot or playpen are up securely.



Baby Walkers are linked to a number of injuries and are not recommended. If you choose to use one, select one with a wide base and a braking system. Alternatively try a stationary activity centre.

Use the harness in the high chair to keep your child from falling out.

SUMMARY - STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT INJURIES	
Developmental Actions	Hazards/Risks
False Swimming Reflex	Drowning, water, stress
Restricted mobility	Fire, Smoke dangers, Scalding
Rolling Over	Falls, rolling from raised surfaces eg. change table, bed
Attempts to sit up	Flipping out of child restraint, prams (3 months)
Sucking and mouthing objects	Ingestion, aspiration, strangulation from strings on dummies, bibs, etc
Motor excitement	Slipping in the bath
Reaching for objects	Burns, cuts, poisoning

### **Other Information available**

For more detailed information on any safety topic visit [www.kidsafent.com.au](http://www.kidsafent.com.au) or contact Kidsafe NT on (08) 89418234 for specific information and advice.

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Kidsafe NT would like to thank Kidsafe WA for allowing us to edit and adapt this fact sheet for the Northern Territory. Excerpts may be copied for educational purposes. Written permission is required to copy this fact sheet in its entirety.

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