

This workshop is the third in our series about preparing for a New Baby During COVID-19. For the last two weeks we covered maternal health topics and child development. This week we talk about important infant safety information.

Infant Safety

- **Wash your hands** (or use a hand sanitizer) before handling your baby. Newborns don't have a strong immune system yet, so they're at risk for infection.
- **Holding your baby:** Support your baby's head and neck. Cradle the head when carrying your baby and support the head when carrying the baby upright or when you lay your baby down. Never shake your newborn, whether in play or in frustration. Shaking can cause bleeding in the brain and even death.
- **Safety in the Home:** Use toddler gates at the top and bottom of stairs. Use plastic inserts to cover electric outlet openings that are not being used. Remove any cords that could get around your baby's neck. Place corner covers around any sharp corners in your home, like on coffee tables. Place child locks on any cabinets in your home and on your toilet seat.
- **Bath Safety:** Since children can drown in very little water, you should always stay with your child when they are in the bathtub. If you have to answer the phone or door, take your child with you. Add non-skid rubber mats or decals to the bottom of your bathtub to reduce the risk of your child slipping while in the tub. Make sure your child sits during a bath.
- **Preventing Falls:** As your baby grows and is able to roll over, they 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 cannot hold them.
- **Preventing Choking:** Babies explore their environment by putting anything and everything into their mouths. This is normal and expected. Don't leave small objects in your baby's reach, even for a moment. Once you start introducing your baby to solid foods (around 4-6 months of age), don't feed your baby hard pieces of food. Cut all the foods you feed your baby into thin pieces to prevent choking.
- **In the Car:** Make sure your baby is securely fastened into the carrier, stroller, or car seat. When setting up the car seat, follow the set-up directions carefully to be sure it is safely installed in the back seat of the car. Always place your baby in a car seat.



Safe Sleep

- **Until their first birthday, babies should sleep on their backs for all sleep times—for naps and at night.** When babies sleep on their stomach, they may have a hard time breathing. So, sleeping on their back is the safest position.



- **Use a firm sleep surface.** A crib, bassinet, portable crib, or play yard is recommended along with a firm mattress and a tight fitting, fitted sheet. Nothing else should be in the crib except for the baby. It is best if your baby's crib is in the same room as where you sleep for the first 4 months to a year.
- **Only bring your baby into your bed to feed or comfort.** Place your baby back in their own sleep space when you are ready to go to sleep. Bed-sharing is not recommended for any babies. If you are able to, purchase a baby monitor, so you can keep an eye on your little one when you are not in the room.
- **Keep soft objects, loose bedding, or any objects that could increase the risk of entrapment, suffocation, or strangulation out of the baby's sleep area.** These include pillows, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, blankets, toys, stuffed animals, bumper pads or similar products that attach to crib slats or sides.
- **It is okay to swaddle your baby through 2 months of age.** Parents should stop swaddling as soon as their baby shows any signs of trying to roll over. Many babies start working on rolling at around 2 months of age. Here is a [link](#) to the Mayo Clinic's how-to swaddle a baby.

Vaccines

- The fact is vaccines save lives and protect against the spread of disease. Vaccinations can protect against 14 serious childhood diseases. We should not be so distracted by COVID-19 that we neglect our children's general health.
- The CDC has a helpful chart with [recommended vaccinations for children birth through 18 years old](#).
- Talk with your healthcare provider about scheduling a safe appointment for your child to continue to receive these crucial vaccinations. In NYC, all children are eligible for FREE vaccinations. To find a doctor who will provide your child with free vaccinations, call 844-692-4692.

An infographic with a blue background and six circular icons. The top row has three red circles: a person walking with a sad face, a warning sign with a virus, and a person in bed with a fever. The bottom row has three green circles: a syringe, a doctor with a stethoscope, and a laptop with a question mark. Text is placed below each icon.

Going outside in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic is stressful and anxiety-inducing.

But skipping doctors appointments and vaccines is also dangerous!

Without vaccines, there is a greater risk of other unwanted and vaccine-preventable diseases.

Make sure you follow the vaccine schedule. If your child is due for any vaccinations it is critical to visit your doctor's office for the vaccines.

Your doctor's office is among the safest places you can go right now. They are taking extensive measures to keep you safe.

Parents and guardians can call the child's health provider to set up an appointment, or call 844-692-4692 for information.

Reach Out & Read

Vaccinations are offered for free at more than 1,000 city facilities as part of the Vaccines for Children Program, as well as at all Health and Hospital clinics. For questions, call 844-692-4692.

Additional Resources for New Yorkers

- [CDC: Infant Safety](#): The CDC site has information and tools to help protect your baby, toddler, child, or teenager from injuries and violence, including sun safety, burns, and more vaccine information.
- [Local Family Support Programs](#): We again want to highlight the fact that there are supports for new parents right in your community. Follow [this link](#) to the NY State Health site to find family support providers who can provide information and support about parenting and your child's health and development.

For any questions about the content or our virtual programming, please email Kristen Rocha Aldrich at krochaaldrich@reachoutandreadnyc.org.