



June e-newsletter, 2009

Topic: Safety

June is National Safety Month! In celebration, this month I will be discussing safety issues that surround a new family. I will cover safety for the pregnant mom, infant safety, ideas for baby proofing your home and car seat safety. Let's use this month and these timely reminders to create an optimal and safe environment for you and your family.

Enjoy!

Nurse Wendy

Safety during Pregnancy

Creating a new life is bound to cause your mind to spin with all the "what ifs?" and protecting yourself – and your baby – are going to be high on the priority list. Being that we spend so much time in our cars, looking into car safety should be of the utmost importance. Here are a few tips from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

- *Always wear your seat belt.* Studies have proven that pregnant moms who do not wear their seat belts are twice as likely to suffer life threatening injuries as the mothers who do wear their seat belts. On that note, make sure the lap belt rides *under* your belly and sits low across your hips. The shoulder belt should rest between your breasts and fit snugly.
- *Move your seat back.* You should sit at least ten inches from the steering wheel to provide the best protection from airbags. If necessary, recline your seat slightly to achieve this distance.
- *If possible, be a passenger.* This will allow you to move your seat far enough back from the airbags or ride in the back seat.

Another common safety concern during pregnancy is trips and falls. As your waistline expands, your center of gravity shifts making you more susceptible to falls both in and out of the home. To help prevent these types of accidents, it's a good idea to wear flat and supportive shoes and if you enjoy walking, perform most of your walking on flat surfaces. Also, keep an eye out for curbs and steps as they are a common cause of twisted and sprained ankles during pregnancy. And as for the stairs, never carry boxes or loads up or down the stairs once you begin to "show"...it greatly increases your risk for falling!

Infant Safety

Accidents are the leading cause of injury and death for children. Most accidents and injuries are preventable, so it is very important to keep your child's safety in mind at all times. Proper supervision is most often the best way to avoid accidents. Here are a few tips that will help to increase your child's safety and give you some peace of mind:

- To avoid falling, never leave your baby unattended on a high surface (like a changing table). When not in your arms, the floor or crib is the safest place for your baby.
- Do not leave your baby alone with pets until they have adjusted to each other.
- Pet reptiles including turtles, snakes and lizards, are a common source of Salmonella infection in children. It's best to keep them away from children.
- Keep all small items (including food) that could cause your baby to choke out of reach. Use the cardboard roll from a toilet paper roll as a guide. Anything small enough to fit through is too small for your baby to handle.
- Avoid all cords (pacifier and toy cords, cords from window coverings and strings and cords on clothing). These all pose a risk of strangulation.
- Drowning is the second most common cause of accidental death! It only takes 1 inch of water and a few seconds for a child to drown. Never leave a child unattended in the bathtub or near any standing water.
- Place your baby on his back to sleep and be sure to use a firm, snug fitting mattress. Keep all fluffy bedding and toys out of the crib and be certain that crib slats are less than 2 and 3/8 inches apart.
- Turn your water heater down to 120 degrees Fahrenheit to avoid accidental burns.
- Walkers have a very high rate of accidental injury and should not be used. Studies have also shown that walkers hinder proper muscular development for standing and walking.
- Program the Poison Control telephone number into all your phones. The national hotline number is 1-800-222-1222.
- Make sure that used or hand-me-down equipment hasn't been recalled for safety reasons. Call the manufacturer or the Consumer Product Safety Commission for an updated list of recalled products (1-800-638-2772 or www.cpsc.gov).

It is important to remember that these are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to safety for your child. I always suggest that new and expectant parents take a first aid class that includes infant safety and techniques for CPR and choking (for example the free Infant Safety and Baby proofing classes offered at PacifiCord. Visit: www.pacificord.com for more information).

Baby Proofing your Home

As parents, we look at our homes in one way—a beautiful and safe refuge for us to return to after a long day. However, an infant or small child will look at your home with an entirely different set of eyes and a much greater curiosity than most adults. Try this trick and you will understand what I mean. Get down on all fours and crawl around your house. Check out the vantage point your child has and think like a baby. What do you see, what can you touch, what would you consider exploring or putting into your mouth? Are there cords you might pull on or

chew on? Are there stairs you might try and climb or toilets you might want to play with? Your child's curiosity is what allows them to learn, but it also can be the cause of trouble in an environment that has not been made safe for him or her. Here are a few things to consider on your road to a safe environment for your child.

- Use covers on electrical outlets and latches on cupboards.
- Install and use stair gates and window guards to prevent falls.
- Remove mobiles from cribs and playpens once your child can stand.
- Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in the house and purchase a fire extinguisher.
- Use wall anchors for large or tall pieces of furniture that can tip over if a child tries to climb on it.
- When cooking, use back burners and turn the handles inward to prevent burns and spills.
- Childproof your swimming pool with a fence and/or gate with a self closing and latching device and alarm. Also, never leave a child near a pool unattended...even for a minute!
- Keep toilet lids closed and latched. For added protection, keep bathroom doors closed when not in use.
- Remove furniture with sharp edges or place guards over the sharp edges to prevent injury.

These are general guidelines to get you thinking like a child. It's a great idea to consider hiring an outside company to come and baby proof your house or you can tag team with another parent and inspect each other's homes for areas that might cause concern. A fresh pair of eyes may catch something you missed!

Car Seat Safety

Here is an astounding statistic! Up to 90% of car seats are installed and used incorrectly! It sounds so simple—put the car seat in your car and belt it in. However, there are many, many things to consider when installing and using a child's safety seat. I am often asked "what is the best car seat for my baby?" The answer is simple, the best car seat is the one that fits your car properly, fits your child properly and is used correctly EVERY time! Remember that every car seat does not fit every car properly; you may need to do some research to find the best fit for your car. Here are a few tips to help you on your way to safe car travel.

- Your child is always safer rear facing. Facing forward is not a promotion, it is actually a demotion! A child must be rear facing until at least twenty pounds and 1 year. However, I recommend that the child remain rear facing until the upper limits of the car seat's weight and height.
- When choosing a safety seat, either buy a new seat, or use a seat that you know the history of. Most seats come with an expiration date on the label (generally 6-8 years from manufacture) and should not be used after that date. Also, check with the manufacturer to make certain the seat has not been recalled. Lastly, never use a seat that has been in a crash, as the integrity has been compromised and is not considered safe. Insurance companies are required to replace all seats that have been involved in a crash.
- Make sure the car safety seat is installed tightly in the vehicle. The seat should not move more than 1" side to side or front to back when tugged on at the belt path. The harness should also fit the child snugly with the retainer clip at the child's nipple line.
- Never place a rear-facing car safety seat in the front seat of a vehicle that has an active front passenger air bag. If the air bag inflates, it will hit the back of the car safety seat, right where your baby's head is, and could cause serious injury or death.
- Make certain the harness straps are in the proper position. When rear-facing make sure the harnesses are in the slots at or below your baby's shoulders. When forward-facing they should be above your child's shoulders.
- In general, the safest position for your child is the center of the back seat. However, in many vehicles (including my own), larger safety seats do not fit well in that seating position. It is safer to install the seat properly in another position than to install it in the center incorrectly.
- Some seat belts need locking clips. Locking clips come with all new car safety seats. If you're not sure, check your vehicle owner's manual. Locking clips are not needed in most newer vehicles.
- If your vehicle was made after 2002, it may come with the LATCH system, which is used to secure car safety seats. You can use either the LATCH system or seat belt to secure the seat, but do not use both at the same time. Also, be certain to use proper LATCH position for the seat you have chosen. Refer to your vehicle owner's manual for proper installation guidelines as well as weight limits when using the LATCH system in your vehicle.
- Make sure the seat is at the correct angle so your infant's head does not flop forward. If you are having difficulty achieving the proper angle, tilt the car safety seat back by putting a rolled towel or other firm padding (such as a pool noodle) under the base near the point where the back and bottom of the vehicle seat meet.
- When placing your child in the forward-facing position, it is a good idea to use the tether strap in addition to the LATCH or safety belt to secure the seat. The tether will provide additional stability for the seat and your child in the event of a crash. Your vehicle manual will provide further instruction as to the location and installation using the tether.
- Do not use any items that did not come with your child's safety seat (headrests, seat covers, mirrors, under mats or toy bars). If it did not come with your seat, then it was not crash tested and is not considered safe. Additionally, in the event of a crash, these items can become projectiles that can cause serious injury to yourself or your child.
- Still having trouble or have questions? Set an appointment with a Child Passenger Safety Technician, such as myself, who can help with your installation. For additional information about PacifiCord's free car seat safety check visit: www.pacificord.com.



While this can seem a bit overwhelming, a properly installed and used child safety seat can be one of the wisest investments you can make for your child and family. If you have questions, seek help!

Join us next month as we celebrate the summer by discussing travel. We will cover traveling during pregnancy as well as bringing your new baby along on your vacation. Until then, be safe!

Sincerely,

Nurse Wendy

Questions?

Email me at: AskNurseWendy@PacifiCord.com

RESOURCES:

Safe Kids – Locate a Child Passenger Safety Technician – www.safekids.org

MedBasics Safety Book – <http://www.babymedbasics.com>

National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) : www.nhtsa.gov

Baby Proofing Directory – www.babyproofingdirectory.com

American Academy of Pediatrics – www.aap.org

EVENTS:

JUNE EVENTS-

June 6th, Alex's Lemonade Stand, Irvine Spectrum Center

Be sure to bring the family by Alex's Lemonade Grand Stand for a glass of lemonade, carrot cake from The Veggie Grill and much more as part of this fundraiser that helps fund childhood cancer research projects. The event will take place from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. in the Giant Wheel Court with activities including a balloon artist and face painter. For more information, please call (949) 753-5180. PacifiCord will have a table at this lively outdoor fundraising event!



June 8th, KTLA Morning News Segment, Channel 5

Nurse Wendy and PacifiCord will be featured live on KTLA morning news on Monday, June 8th starting at 5:30am till about 7:30am. Tune in to see our live segment regarding our free prenatal classes!

Calling all expectant mothers! If you are interested in being part of this live KTLA news segment, please contact Gina Urquizu at: gurquizu@pacificord.com. The first eight expectant mothers to arrive bright and early at 5:15am at Lollipop Dream in Sherman Oaks, CA will receive a \$100 gift certificate to Target! Contact Gina for more information!

June 14-15: New Mom Expo, Anaheim Convention Center.

Come visit the PacifiCord booth (#912) and enter to win a Boon Flair Pedestal highchair (value \$200). This 2-day event is designed to enrich the experience of expectant parents, young families, and grandparents. Event website: <http://www.newmomexpo.com/>

Interested in attending?

Email PacifiCord for a free VIP pass (\$10 value). Available as supplies last. First come, first serve. Email: info@pacificord.com.

June 14-15: BabyTime Expo, San Diego Convention Center

Come visit the PacifiCord booth #230-B—yes, we'll be at two places on the same weekend! For more information about this event visit: <http://www.babytimeexpo.com>.

JULY EVENTS-

In addition to our Irvine headquarters, PacifiCord will start offering Free Prenatal Classes in both Sherman Oaks and Santa Monica starting in July! For additional information, including our class schedule for these locations, please visit our website (which will be updated to include these locations) starting Monday, June 8th!

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