SAFETY TIPS

By law (and good sense!), babies cannot travel in any vehicle unless they are safely buckled into an approved child safety seat. This includes the trip home from the hospital and even short trips around town.

New baby cribs are much safer than older cribs. If you have an older crib, make sure that the openings between the side slats are no wider than three fingers, that the mattress is firm and fits snugly against the crib sides, and that the headboard and footboard don’t have openings that could trap a baby. If a crib was built before 1978, it may have lead-based paint. Lead-based paint anywhere in a baby’s environment can be very dangerous.

To avoid suffocation, do not put a pillow in your baby’s crib. He doesn’t need it, and it’s dangerous. Should his face become buried in it, he would not have the strength to lift his head. When placing a baby in a crib, always lay him on his back, not on his stomach. Some parents use an electronic monitor in baby’s room to alert them to trouble.
The “Baby Bouncer” newsletter includes 12 editions that will accompany you through the wondrous first year of your baby’s life. It will answer many of your questions about safety, feeding, health, and the stages of development. All babies are unique, of course, so check with your family doctor if your baby seems to be developing in ways significantly different from those described in the “Baby Bouncer.”

The first month of your baby’s life is full of many changes. But the baby isn’t the only one to experience change. Here is a word to you parents, whose lives will take on new meanings very quickly.

**EXERCISES**

As you start to feel less tired and sore, you can begin exercising. Most women need some abdominal exercises to tighten stretched stomach muscles. If you gained excess weight during pregnancy, now is the time to start losing those pounds before they multiply. If you are breastfeeding, don’t lose more than about one pound per month.

During childbirth education classes, you may have learned exercises to help keep you in shape. Continue to do these now. Sit-ups (with bent knees), leg raises and crunches all help the hard-to-exercise stomach muscles. Go easy if you have back problems.

After nine months of pregnancy your body needs gentle, but continual, exercise. Try to set aside a time every day to run through your routine. This might also be a good time to relax and be by yourself for a few minutes. Joining a class of new mothers may help you develop a schedule and choose the best exercise for you. Don’t expect immediate results. It may take several months to get your figure back. Stick with it—the results will show soon!

**BABY’S HEALTH**

Expect Your Baby to:

• Sleep a total of 18 to 22 hours each day.
• Use 10 or more diapers a day.
• Cry as much as 2 hours each day.
• Breathe noisily. Remember, he has just begun to breathe.
• Have runny, irregular bowel movements, unless breast-fed.

Also, remember that each baby is an individual and will grow, develop and react differently than any other baby. You have probably noticed the soft spot on top of your baby’s head. This is normal. It appears where skull bones have not yet joined and hardened. Baby’s skull was soft to allow the head to pass through the birth canal. During the first year, the flexible skull gives baby’s brain room to grow. Although the soft spot is covered by tough membrane, you need to avoid bumping or hitting baby’s head. Washing and rubbing will not harm the baby’s head. Washing and rubbing will not harm the baby’s head. Massaging the scalp is important to keep baby’s head clean, especially if “cradle cap” occurs. Cradle cap looks like scaly, dandruff-like patches on baby’s scalp. It can usually be removed by massaging his scalp with baby oil, and then washing his scalp with shampoo and a washcloth.