

Preventing Falls in Hospitalized Infants

Parent Information

Babies have fallen in the hospital while in the care of their parents.

In the hospital, there may be several factors that increase the risk for falls.

Studies show most infant falls occur:

- when bed-sharing with a parent
- during the night
- on day 2-3 after birth
- following a cesarean section birth
- with use of some medications
- when there are many people in your room that may be distracting

As new parents, you may **feel very tired** following the birth of your baby. Feelings of fatigue are common due to the lack of sleep, stress, disruption in your usual routines and the unfamiliar hospital environment.

Medications, epidurals, anesthetics, and bleeding after birth may increase your risk of falling because you might **feel dizzy or weak**. These factors may increase the risk of dropping your baby.

Together, we can provide safe care for your baby, by learning about falls risk and following these important steps about prevention and supporting safe sleep practices.

- ◆ Be aware of “wet floor” signs. Report trip hazards and liquid spills promptly to the hospital staff.
- ◆ Wear safe, non-skid foot wear; low heeled and well-fitted.
- ◆ Side rails should be “up” on cots and cribs. Portholes should be closed on incubators.
- ◆ Brakes should be used on cots, cribs, incubators and weigh scales.
- ◆ Use safety restraint straps in car seats, strollers, swings or bouncy chairs.

Skin-to-skin

Kangaroo Care (KC)

Skin-to-skin care has great benefits for both you and your baby.



It is preferable to use a recliner chair (in NICU) when providing KC. Please ask for assistance.

Skin-to-skin care helps:

- you bond with your baby
 - your baby cope with stress, and
 - build your breast milk supply.
- ◆ Please refrain from using an *electronic* device, such as your phone or tablet while holding your baby. It is best to use both hands for safety.



Lifting your baby in and out of their crib, cot or incubator can sometimes feel awkward. **Pain and discomfort** after birth can make it difficult for you to safely lift or move your baby.

Low room lighting and furniture can make it hard to move around safely in your room.

In the hospital, risk for falls may be higher if your baby is connected to **medical equipment** such as monitors, IV pumps or tubes that pose **tripping hazards**.

Awareness of these risk factors for you and your baby's safety is very important.

Most falls can be prevented with support and education from your health care team.



Your health care team will talk with you about these risk factors for falls. Here are some safety tips for you to think about.

- ◆ To avoid dizziness, take your time when sitting up, standing up or turning. Tell us if you feel dizzy.
- ◆ Brakes should be “on” when you transfer from a bed, stretcher, recliner or wheelchair.
- ◆ If you are in pain or discomfort, please ask for help.
- ◆ Get plenty of rest. Try to sleep when your baby is sleeping.
- ◆ Take turns with your partner or support person, so you both get some much needed rest.
- ◆ If you are feeling tired or sleepy, please place your baby back in their “own sleep space” to avoid falling asleep with your baby in your arms.



Falling asleep with your baby in your arms increases the risk for infant falls both at home and in the hospital.



Please ask your nurse for the information pamphlet on **“Safe Sleep.”**

- ◆ If you fall asleep with your baby in your arms, your nurse will help you return your baby to their own sleep space. This allows you to get some much needed rest.
- ◆ If you need help moving or handling your baby, please ask for help.
- ◆ Take your time when doing any baby care. Don't be distracted.
- ◆ When you move your baby, make sure any lines, cords and tubes are out of the way and safely secured.
- ◆ The safest way to transfer your baby from one area of the hospital to another is in a cot. Walking while carrying your baby in your arms puts you both at risk.