

HEALTH & FITNESS

Outdated or poorly maintained equipment are the cause of most injuries involving babies

How often have you wondered what adventure your baby will think of next? A baby has endless energy and curiosity and unpredictable interests. For safety, take note of some common problems and act before your baby does.

Little ones spend many hours in cribs, strollers, walkers and high chairs. Yet, registered nurses point out nursery equipment often causes injury to infants.

Check your crib against safety regulations established by Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada. Look for sturdy construction with double locks used simultaneously to drop the side slats less than six centimetres apart and corner posts less than three centimetres higher than the sides of the crib.

The mattress should be less than 15 centimetres thick and should not have a soft surface. Pushed into one corner, the mattress should not be more than three centimetres from the crib side.

The mattress support should fit tightly when you rattle the crib from side to side and thump the mattress from top to bottom. With the side raised there should be 66 centimetres from the floor of the crib to the top of the railing. When the side is lowered there should still be 23 centimetres of railing or more to protect the child.

Check second-hand cribs against these standards as well as for split, cracked or broken parts and hardware. Injuries often happen with outdated or poorly maintained equipment.

When your child is in the crib, secure the sides, but do not harness or tie the child as this may cause strangulation.

Similarly, never leave a necklace or scarf or a pacifier with a long cord in the crib with your baby.

Check bumper pads for wear and

tear and remove any harmful, loose pieces. If your baby can stand, remove the bumper pads and large toys that may serve as steps for climbing out. Stop using the crib once the child can climb out.

High chair injuries occur with unrestrained and under-supervised children. They stand up and fall, wiggle out under the tray, or twist arms or legs through the bars.

Prevent these injuries with a wide-based high chair and a seat belt that is easy to fasten and in good condition. Keep the chair far enough from nearby furniture and walls to stop the child pushing off with its legs and toppling the chair over. And, of course, never leave a child alone.

Registered nurses recommend that you choose a stroller that fits the size of the child. Look for restraining straps, a strong braking system and a reliable locking mechanism that prevents accidental folding when in use. You need large, secure wheels that run easily on different surfaces. Take care when you reverse the handle of a stroller. Injuries most often found relate to falls or fingers caught when the handle on a stroller is reversed.

Many registered nurses do not recommend the use of a baby walker at all. Walkers enable a child to propel itself as fast as a metre a second and find dangers it is too young to recognize.

Serious head injuries and fractures result from tumbling down stairways. Cuts, bruises and burns may result from pulling down kitchenware by the cords or by tablecloths.

If you do have a walker, make sure it is stable, but the key to safety is increased supervision. While a baby on hands and knees may be adept at getting into trouble, one in a walker is just that much faster.

Cachet Health Series

Topic: Clearing up Cholesterol Confusion

Speaker: Vanessa Miles, Registered Dietitian
Date: Tuesday, November 24, 1998
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Location: Cachet Rehabilitation Group
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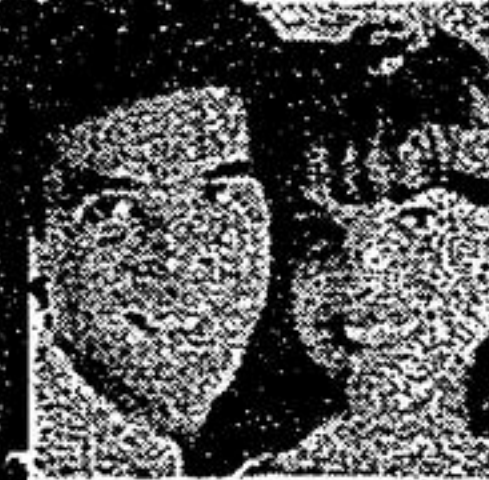
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Breast milk is the most efficiently digested infant foods, as evidence by rapid gastric emptying, less perceived intestinal distress, and fewer problems with reflux due to a slower flow of milk from the mother's nipple and less air ingested with feeding. Breast feeding's other major asset is a profound enhancement of the maternal-infant bond which further nurtures an infant's development.

In conjunction with all of the significant benefits breast feeding provides infants, the Canadian Paediatric Society and the American Academy of Pediatrics are now recommending that mothers breast feed their babies for as long as they can.


In our office, we have been providing guidance and counselling to active and future mothers wishing to breast feed. Prenatal consultation is recommended to detect or prevent possible failure of proper breast feeding techniques which will result in maximum benefit and emotional satisfaction for both the mother and child.



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