



Baby Care Tips for Grandparents

This handout summarizes the most important updates made to baby care guidelines in the past few years.

Feeding

- Feed Baby when you see hunger cues, not according to a schedule
- Babies eat often, at least 8 to 12 times every 24-hours
- Feed Baby only breastmilk or formula until about 6 months—no water, no solid foods, and no cereal in bottle

Crying & Comforting

- Responding to a baby's cries develops their ability to trust, an important developmental milestone
- If you use a white noise machine or recording, keep the volume low
- Wait until breastfeeding is going well before giving a breastfed baby a pacifier
- Just one shake can damage a baby's brain
- If you find yourself losing patience, put the baby in a safe place like a crib until you are calm (call for help if needed)

Safe Swaddling

- Make sure it's loose enough so Baby can bend her legs (this is important for healthy hip development)
- Make sure the baby's hands are able to move to the mouth, which is a source of comfort and an important hunger cue
- Swaddling can increase the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), so stop swaddling when your grandchild starts showing signs of being able to roll onto the tummy



Early-hunger cues: mouth opening, turning head seeking/rooting for a breast



Mid-hunger cues: stretching, increased physical movement, hand to mouth



Late-hunger cues: agitated, crying, turning red



Put Baby to sleep on her back in a safety-approved crib, bassinet, or play yard

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SIDS & Safe Sleep Environment

Though Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related deaths are rare, they are the leading cause of death in the first year of life.

How to reduce your grandchild's risk:

- Always place Baby on their back to sleep in a safety-approved crib, bassinet, or play yard
- Put nothing in the sleep area but a firm mattress with a tight-fitting sheet—no soft objects, loose bedding, or bumper pads
- If you think Baby is cold, dress in a wearable blanket or sleep sack
- Have Baby sleep in the same room as you (but not in the same bed)
- After breastfeeding is well-established, offer Baby a pacifier when you lay them down to sleep (do not force to take it or coat it with any substances)
- Do not smoke (or allow others to) in your home, car, or around the baby
- If you smoke, do it outside in a “smoking jacket” that is stored outside and wash your hands before touching the baby
- Avoid overheating the baby—don't put a hat on her indoors and don't overdress
- Keep the room at a comfortable temperature—around 70°F (21°C)

Baby Care Resources

- American Academy of Pediatrics' baby healthcare site—
HealthyChildren.org
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) prevention and support—
FirstCandle.org
- Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome—
DontShake.org (1-888-435-7553)
- Center for Disease Control's public health information—
CDC.gov
- Women's health information, including breastfeeding—
WomensHealth.gov



Supervised tummy time strengthens back and neck muscles and reduces the risk of SIDS



Health & Safety Tips for Grandparents

Keep Baby Healthy

- Get your Tdap booster, flu shot, and shingles vaccine
- Keep Baby away from anyone who is sick
- Avoid enclosed public areas
- Wash your hands before touching and after diapering Baby

Sun & Insect Safety

- Avoid the midday sun
- Cover Baby's arms and legs in lightweight clothing and use a hat to shade your grandchild's face
- When suitable clothing and shade are not available, apply a small amount of sunscreen (with at least 15 SPF) to Baby's exposed skin
- Stay in the shade or use a sun tent
- Stay indoors at dawn and dusk to avoid mosquitos
- Avoid areas that attract stinging insects and mosquitos
- Fix door and window screens
- If you live in an area that has ticks, check Baby's skin often

General Baby Care Safety

- Always put Baby to sleep on their back in a safe sleep environment, such as a crib or bassinet with nothing in it but a firm mattress and tight-fitting sheet
- Never leave Baby alone unless you place them on their back in a safe place like a crib
- Never leave Baby alone with a pet or young child
- Never leave Baby alone in or near water
- Use safety straps on all baby equipment
- Keep one hand on Baby when on a high surface
- Take an infant CPR and first aid class (Heart.org)

Emergency: 911

Poison Control:
1-800-222-1222 or
Poison.org

Doctor: _____

Parent: _____

Parent: _____

Ambulance: _____

Police: _____

Fire: _____

When to Call Baby's Parents and/or Doctor:

- A fever of 100.4°F
- Unusual sleepiness
- Constant crying
- Projectile vomiting
- Frequent coughing
- Difficulty breathing
- Pale or blue skin color
- Floppy arms and legs
- Watery stools (diarrhea)
- White stools or stools with blood or mucus
- Urate (a reddish stain) in more than one diaper
- A dry mouth and lips or dark yellow urine

Call 911 if Baby:

- Has serious difficulty breathing
- Has blue lips, tongue, or mouth

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Infant Car Seat Tips

- Use a rear-facing car seat (if it's used, make sure it hasn't expired or been in a crash)
- Install the car seat in the back seat (middle position is safest), carefully following the manuals for both your car and the car seat
- Get a car seat inspection from an expert (find a station near you at SaferCar.gov)

Heatstroke and Car Safety

- Never leave a child alone in the car, not for a minute
- Make it a habit to look in the back seat to make sure all children are out of the car—put your purse, phone, or wallet in the back seat as a reminder to **look before you lock**
- Always lock your car to prevent children from getting inside without your knowledge
- Check around your car before **slowly** backing up
- While parked in a garage, make sure your car is turned off to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning
- Keep car keys out of children's reach

Home Safety Tips

- Familiarize yourself with childproofing recommendations (SafeKids.org)
- Go through every room at your grandchild's level and remove objects they can choke on (anything that fits through a toilet paper roll)
- Store poisons up and out of reach—**especially medications**, detergent pods, button batteries, and cleaning supplies
- Anchor furniture and TVs that can tip over onto a child
- Install locking outlet covers, toilet seat locks, trigger locks, gates on stairs, drawer latches, and door knob covers
- Cut or tie up cords from window coverings, secure electrical cords, and lock away plastic bags to prevent strangulation
- Set your hot water heater to warm (around 120°F)
- Make sure smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are properly placed and batteries are changed every 6 months
- Have a child-focused fire and disaster plan (RedCross.org) and be aware that the smoke alarm may not wake them up

Car Seat Install Tips



When wiggled with the force of a handshake, the base should not move more than 1" from side-to-side.



Make sure the harness clip is at armpit level and the straps are at Baby's shoulders. If you can pinch a fold, you need to tighten the harness.



Keep Baby rear-facing until they have reached the seat's rear-facing height or weight limit.



Understanding Grandparenting Quiz

- 1. What are the health benefits of being an involved grandparent?**
 - A. Decreases risk of Alzheimer's Disease
 - B. Boosts immunity
 - C. Promotes strength, energy, and sleep
 - D. All of the above
- 2. Why is it beneficial for new parents to have time alone with the baby right after birth?**
 - A. To allow Mom and Baby to focus on feeding and bonding
 - B. To allow time for the partner to cut the umbilical cord
 - C. To allow time for necessary newborn procedures
 - D. To allow the staff to bathe the baby
- 3. Holding a baby skin to skin can calm a fussy newborn.**
 - A. True
 - B. False
- 4. How long might the "baby blues" last for a new mother?**
 - A. About 1 to 2 days after birth
 - B. For a couple of weeks after birth
 - C. Up to 12 months after birth
- 5. Which of the following are symptoms of the baby blues?**
 - A. Having periods of forgetfulness
 - B. Being sad and weepy
 - C. Feeling tired
 - D. Not being able to care for the baby
 - E. All of the above
- 6. _____ can hurt a baby's lungs.**
 - A. Diaper rash cream
 - B. Formula
 - C. Baby powder
 - D. Swaddling
- 7. To protect your grandchild from germs, when is the best time to wash your hands?**
 - A. Before touching the baby
 - B. Before diapering the baby
 - C. Before leaving the hospital room
 - D. Before eating a meal
- 8. What are some reasons a child may accidentally be left alone in a hot car?**
 - A. Forget the child is in the car when they arrive at their destination
 - B. Run into a store for a quick errand
 - C. A child finds their way into a car and can't get out
 - D. All of the above
- 9. It's safe to move a baby to a forward-facing car seat as soon as possible.**
 - A. True
 - B. False
- 10. Choose all true statements about safe sleep:**
 - A. Putting a baby to sleep on their back reduces the risk of SIDS
 - B. Having nothing but a firm mattress with a tight-fitting sheet in the crib reduces the risk of SIDS
 - C. Breastfeeding can reduce the risk of SIDS
 - D. Room-sharing reduces the risk of SIDS



- 11. Grandparents' medications are one of the most common causes of childhood poisoning.**
- A. True
 - B. False
- 12. When should a baby be fed?**
- A. At feedings scheduled about 2 to 3 hours apart
 - B. Whenever the baby cries
 - C. After the baby has a bowel movement
 - D. When the baby shows hunger cues
- 13. It's recommended that babies breastfeed for 12 months and as long as both mother and baby would like after that.**
- A. True
 - B. False
- 14. When is it recommended that parents start to feed solids to a breastfed baby?**
- A. Around 4 months
 - B. Around 6 months
 - C. When baby is able to hold a bottle
 - D. When a baby stops being interested in breastfeeding
- 15. Which of the following is *not* an open-ended question to ask the new parent?**
- A. How can I help?
 - B. How long would you like us to stay?
 - C. How are you feeling?
 - D. What are your thoughts about that?