

# Protecting Your Baby at Home

Jennifer Voniatis, her husband Nick and their infant son Jordan enjoy the time they have together as a family. But like many first-time parents they felt unprepared and apprehensive when they first brought their newborn baby home from the hospital.

*"I've never done this before and being responsible for a new baby is a little scary and overwhelming at first. But at this point he's five months and we're used to it and having a good time."*

Along the way Jenn and Nick have learned a lot about what it takes to keep their baby safe, especially an active, curious little boy like Jordan.

*"I think probably the most important thing I've learned is to strap them in to everything. Because when they roll you don't have an indication they're just going to roll at some point. So, strap them in even if they're inert strap, them into that bouncy chair, strap them into the swing because you never know."*

Injuries are a leading cause of death in children younger than one, but experts believe most of these could've been prevented.

*"Some parents think that when an infant is born, because they can't necessarily roll intentionally on their own, they may not be able to fall, but actually babies do have startle reflexes and sometimes they just roll early and so parents should be aware that infants can fall."*

Even something simple like getting a cup of coffee in the morning can put your baby at risk.

*"Burning accidents are the most common ones. For example, a mother drinks her soup or her coffee and the child spills it on himself."*

So, you don't ever want to carry your baby and hot items like coffee or soup at the same time. Do what Jenn does and put the baby in a safe place and then get the coffee.

*"We also counsel the parents that they should never eat with their infants on their laps. The infants are not neurologically coordinated, and they can just move their hands inadvertently and spill coffee or soups on their lap. That's a no no never eat with your infant in your lap."*

Because parents of newborns will inevitably be exhausted those first few weeks, the experts tell us it's sometimes important to put the baby down, even if he's crying so you can get some coffee or breakfast or just to catch your breath.

*"Be aware of when you're extremely fatigued and overwhelmed. I think that's number one. They lose their guard. They lose the edge they have when they're overwhelmed. So, you have to accept the fact that if you have a newborn you're going to be fatigued. Number 1. Accept help from family members and know that a crying baby is acceptable. So, if you have to leave the baby in the crib to be able to go to the kitchen and do your normal procedure for the morning, get your breakfast etcetera that is acceptable. There's no reason to actually take the baby with you just because he's crying."*

Stroller safety is another area of concern. Since babies are on the go the stroller can be like a magic carpet. But you want to make sure you don't inadvertently put him in harm's way.

*"Actually, babies are injured in strollers a lot. There are actually criteria for age and weight on most strollers so that's the first thing, to know that the stroller is appropriate for the age and size of your baby. Second thing is not locking the stroller, so it collapses especially when you're on all different terrains- it's not locked, and the stroller collapses with the baby in it. Make sure there is a five-point restraint in the stroller and that you use it. Having the restraints does not mean people use them. The*

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*other is overloading the stroller putting several objects on the handle bars and therefore the stroller topples over.”*

*“When you are using your stroller and you are carrying your diaper bag you don’t want to put it right on top of the handle because that could tip the stroller and the baby could fall.”*

The best place for the diaper bag is in the bay area in the base of the stroller so it helps the stroller stay upright. Other stroller safety tips include: Never leave a child unattended in a stroller; Securely fasten any toys or bumpers so they don’t fall on the child; Make sure releases and hinges are out of the child’s reach; Use a stroller with easy to operate brakes and a wide base so it’s less likely to tip over.