

Preventing Infant Falls

Every new parent thinks about their new baby's safety—but did you know that safety starts in the hospital, before you go home? This is when you can take steps to reduce the risk of your baby falling. The most common reason newborns fall is because of exhausted parents. While you're in the hospital, it's important to get enough rest to keep your newborn safe.

Exhausted parents are more likely to fall asleep and let their newborns slip from their arms. The main reasons babies fall in the hospital include: Caregiver exhaustion. This is especially true on the second day after delivery, when new moms tend to be more tired and are already starting to miss sleep. Opioid medications. A new mom is given opioid medications for pain. This can make the mother sleepy and less able to hold a wiggling baby. A history of substance abuse. Inexperience breastfeeding. During breastfeeding, a new mom may not be used to the proper holding positions. C-section. If you have had a C-Section, you may not be physically able to hold your baby.

Furniture in your maternity room may also be a risk factor for newborn falls. Many bassinets are lower than a typical hospital bed, which can make it tough to put your baby down to sleep.

Skin-to-skin contact is good for newborns, but it can also increase the risk of a fall. Skin-to-skin contact causes your body to release relaxing hormones that can make you sleepy and increase the chances of a fall or drop. There are several steps you can take to help prevent an accidental infant fall.

Ask for help if you're tired, especially if you have taken pain medications in the last 2 to 4 hours. Make sure you can safely move your newborn from the hospital bed to the bassinet after a feeding or after receiving pain medications. If you are not sure, ask for help. Enjoy skin-to-skin contact with your baby, but make sure to call a nurse or ask your partner or another caregiver to take your baby to a safe sleeping environment before you fall asleep.

Make sure you get as much uninterrupted sleep as possible, especially in the first 48 hours after delivery. If you're breastfeeding, take advantage of lactation education and counseling to ensure you are feeding your baby in the proper holding technique. Pay attention to when you're feeling tired and ask for help if you're having trouble staying awake while holding or breastfeeding your newborn so you can keep your baby safe and healthy in the hospital.