



Health & Safety Tips for Infants in Child Care

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When should infant's hands be washed?

- Infant's hands should be washed upon arrival to child care, before and after eating, after getting diaper changed, after spitting up on hands, after wiping nose with hands, after playing outside, whenever visibly dirty.

What should I know about bottlefeeding?

- Bottles of formula or breastmilk are recommended to be discarded after a feeding (required by food program).
- Bottles should be heated in warm water, crockpot, or bottlewarmer – no microwaves.
- If crockpot is used for heating bottles of formula, it should be emptied, sanitized and refilled daily.
- Breastmilk should be heated separately from other bottles in container of warm water.
- Provider should wash hands before preparing and serving bottles. Provider should wash at a sink not used for diapering/toileting.
- If there is only one sink used for food preparation and diapering, water should be taken from the kitchen sink daily instead of using water from the tap within the room (child care center).
- Bottles should be labeled with infant's name and the time the bottle was offered/heated to ensure it is not given past one hour or given to the wrong child.
- Contents of bottles should be tested before being served to prevent burns.
- Infants should be fed on demand, not by a rigid schedule.
- Infants must be held or within arm's reach when given a bottle; bottles cannot not be propped.

What should I know about meals for my infant?

- Infant's hands should be washed before and after eating.
- The highchair must have a safety strap and a crotch bar/ strap to protect an infant from sliding under the tray, causing a head entrapment hazard or climbing out causing a fall. The safety strap must always be used.
- The highchair tray should be cleaned and sanitized before food is served.
- Food should be served in dishes/plates, not placed directly on the highchair tray. It is more sanitary and more respectful. No Styrofoam dishes/cups or disposable plastic utensils should be used with infants.
- The temperature of food should be tested before serving to prevent burns.
- Food should not be fed out of jar/container unless infant eats the entire amount.
- If food is saved, it should only be saved for 24 hours.
- Food should be served in pieces ¼" or smaller to prevent choking.

- A child should always be closely supervised when eating, in case of choking.
- If utensil, cup, or dish is thrown or falls on the floor, it should be washed or replaced before giving it back to an infant.

When or how should swings, bouncy chairs, car seat carriers, etc. be used for my infant?

- These devices are not approved to be used for sleeping. Infants are only allowed to sleep in an approved crib or playpen.
- If these devices are used, time should be limited to maximum of 15 minutes, two times a day.
- Safety straps should always be used properly along with close supervision to prevent strangulation.
- Bouncy chairs, Bumbo seats (avoid placing on hard surfaces), car seats, etc. should not be placed on elevated surfaces, only on the floor away from stairs.
- Infants need to have floor time (on tummy and on back) when they are awake and supervised to facilitate proper development.

What should I make sure I discuss with a provider regarding my infant's sleeping practices?

- Infants must always be placed completely flat on their backs in a crib or playpen for sleep.
- Ask to look at the crib/playpen:
 - Crib: by December 28, 2012, all child care programs must use cribs that meet new federal standards made effective June 28, 2011. Check www.cpsc.gov for details.
 - Playpen: check www.cpsc.gov website to see if model number is recalled; no holes in mesh; sturdy frame; only use pad provided by manufacturer of playpen; no extra padding; fitted playpen sheet*.
 - * Mattress/pad must maintain shape when fitted sheet is used. Mattress/pad must lay flat and touch all four corners of the frame.
- Infants must be visually checked while sleeping (approximately every 10-15 minutes).
- Monitor must be used so infant can be heard at all times when sleeping.
- If crib/playpen is used by other infants, sheets should be changed between. Sheets should not be shared.
- Sheets should be washed weekly, sooner if soiled.
- Bibs and hooded sweatshirts should be removed when sleeping to prevent risk of strangulation.
- Pacifiers should not be tied around an infant's neck or clipped to an infant's clothing for sleep. Stuffed toys attached to pacifiers are not allowed for sleep.
- Blankets are not recommended. If blanket is used, only one thin blanket can be used (no toys, pillows, bumper pads or other soft items in crib/playpen). Consider using a sleep sack instead of a blanket.

- Teething necklaces are not allowed to be worn during sleep.
- Licensing requires written parental permission to use one blanket or sleep sack, a pacifier, and a security item for sleep.
- Infants' heads must be uncovered. Covering their heads can cause overheating and suffocation.
- Swaddling is not recommended. If you want your infant to be swaddled, only one thin blanket should be used and it should not come any higher than to the infant's shoulders. Swaddling should be discontinued once an infant turns 2 months old or sooner if showing signs of rolling.
- It is recommended that crib/playpens are spaced 3 feet from other cribs/playpens or separated by a solid barrier to help decrease germs from spreading when infants sleep due to coughing/sneezing.
- Crib/playpen should be placed in a safe location with nothing within reach (ex. monitor cord, window blinds, etc.)
- Nothing should be attached to the crib/playpen, hung on sides, or over the top.

What should I know about diapering?

- Diapers should be visually checked at least every 2 hours.
- Infant's bottom should be cleaned with a wipe even if only wet.
- Infant's hands should be washed after every diaper change (clean wipe can be used to wash infant's hands until infant has head and neck control).
- Diapering pad should be washable and nonporous with no tears or holes. Diapering pads should not be covered with fabric.
- Safety straps on diaper pads and changing tables are not recommended to use because the straps spread germs and give providers a false sense of security. The provider should keep a hand on the infant at all times when diapering.
- Pad should be disinfected after every diaper change.
- Provider's hands should be washed after every diaper change.
- Home child care: Hands should be washed in bathroom. Center child care: Hands should be washed at diapering sink. If only one sink is available for diapering and food prep, then sink faucet/handles should be disinfected after using.
- Baby powder is not recommended to use; it can affect an infant's breathing.

Anything else I should look for related to health & safety?

- Mouthed toys should be picked up after they are mouthed and set aside before another infant touches it.
- Mouthed toys should be cleaned and sanitized daily. Other toys and infant equipment (ex. exersaucer) should be cleaned weekly.
- Pacifiers should be labeled, stored open to air, washed with soap and water if they fall on floor, checked daily for tears, and stored separately from diapering supplies.
- Infants spend a lot of time on the floor, so carpets should be vacuumed daily, steam cleaned periodically (ideally monthly). Tile, vinyl, wood flooring should be swept/cleaned daily.
- It is recommended for adults to remove their shoes or change into shoes only worn indoors to prevent contaminating the floor in an infant room.
- Windows should be opened daily for fresh air (even in the winter).
- Infants should be taken outside daily (weather permitting) for fresh air and change in scenery.
- Bleach water solution is recommended for sanitizing/disinfecting. Surface or item needs to be cleaned with soap and water first. Bleach solution needs to be mixed every day to be effective. If another product is used, it must be EPA registered and used according to the manufacturers instructions.
- Infants should have clean face, hair, and clothing when parents pick them up. Nose should be wiped, food removed from face and hair, and clothes/bibs changed as needed due to food, drool, spit-up, etc. Make sure parents provide plenty of extra clothing.
- All toys should be checked to make sure they are not choking hazards (toys should not be able to fit inside the inside of a toilet paper tube). Toys should also be made out of nontoxic materials and be free from sharp points/edges and loose parts.
- Safety check of the room (center child care) or of the home (home child care) should be done daily to look for possible safety hazards. Example: all outlets should be covered, blind cords out of reach, etc.
- Parents should be given a daily communication sheet recounting their infant's day (when infant ate and how much, when infant slept and how long, diaper changes, activities, etc.).
- If the provider has a pet, it should never be left alone with an infant.
- Gates are required at the top and bottom of stairs. A wall-mounted gate is recommended at the top of stairs instead of a pressure bar style.

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