

A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair smiling warmly while holding a baby. The baby is wearing a white long-sleeved sweater and is peacefully sleeping with its head resting on the woman's shoulder. The background is a neutral, light-colored wall.

0-6 months

**Safe  
start**

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# why this brochure?

Even a very young baby is continuously exploring what he can and cannot do. By trying something new each time, your child learns about ten new things each day. In itself, this is very positive. But since your baby is still too young to understand danger, you will have to keep a close eye on him. Obviously, this is not possible 24 hours a day. This means you'll have to make sure the nursery and the rest of your home are as child-friendly as possible, in order to reduce any risks.

This brochure contains practical tips for:

- Safe sleeping
- Dealing with high surfaces (sofa, changing table, bed)
- Dealing with hot liquids (tea, coffee, bathwater, hot water bottle)
- Preventing suffocation (including first aid tips)
- Bicycling with baby

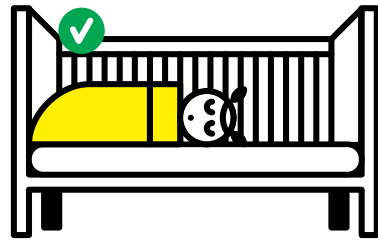
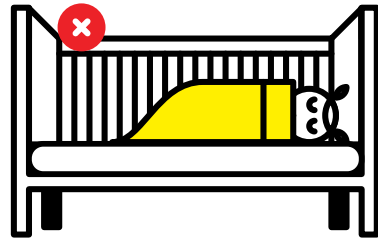
Curious whether your nursery is safe? Make sure to go through the checklist on the back.

## → safe sleeping

To reduce the risk of cot death as much as possible, it is advisable to take the following measures:

- Put your baby to sleep on his back from birth.
- For the first 2 years, use a snug-fitting baby sleeping bag. A blanket and sheet can also be used. Do not use a baby or adult comforter.

- Make up the bed short and snug, so that your baby's feet almost touch the end of the bed and the bedding reaches his shoulders.



- Make sure the mattress is firm and flat.
- It is preferable not to use a plastic sheet. If you want to use a plastic sheet, do not place it under your baby's head.
- Do not use a bumper, pillow, wedge or support pillow in the bassinet or cot.
- For the first six months, have your child sleep in your room in his own bassinet or cot. At any rate, do not have your baby sleep with you in your bed for the first four months.
- Do not give your child any medicine that could be sleep-inducing. This includes cough syrup.
- Do not smoke near your child or in rooms where your child spends much time. Babies are extra sensitive to tobacco smoke and incense. If you quit smoking when pregnant, try not to start up again. If you smoke, do it outdoors.

- Make sure your baby does not become overly exhausted and avoid long car trips.
- Make sure your baby is not too warmly dressed, also when in the car. You can tell whether a child is too warm or too cold by feeling his neck.

More information? Ask the health centre (consultatiebureau) or the Post natal care (kraamzorg) service for the 'Safe Sleeping' brochure or have a look at [www.veiligheid.nl/veiligsapen](http://www.veiligheid.nl/veiligsapen).

## → dealing with high surfaces

A newborn does not move much, but this quickly changes. Before you know it, your baby will be moving his hands and feet with more intensity and grabbing for everything within reach. Your baby will also suddenly start rolling over. If this happens in the playpen, there is nothing to worry

about. But children often roll over for the first time from their back to their stomach when lying on the sofa or changing table. Be prepared for this. A few tips:

- Never leave your child on the changing table unattended. Always keep your hand close by to respond to any unexpected movements. If you need to do something else, place your child in his cot.
- Use a changing pad with raised edges on the changing table.
- When changing your baby's nappy or dressing him, make sure you have laid out everything you will need and it is all within easy reach.
- When placing your baby briefly on a sofa or large bed, always stay close by.
- Place the bouncy seat on the ground. Want to feed your child at the table? No problem. But only place the bouncy seat on a high surface if you are right next to it.
- Never place an infant car seat on top of a shopping trolley. Place the car seat in the trolley itself or use the special attachment system.





## → ow! that's hot!

During the first 6 months, the greatest risks involve burns: from a hot water bottle, scalding bath or hot tea or coffee. And these are the most important tips for preventing accidents:

### Hot water bottle

- Only use a hot water bottle or heat pack to warm up the bed. Remove it from the bed before placing your child in it.
- If you still want to use a hot water bottle when your baby is in his cot, always consult an expert first.
- Place the hot water bottle in a cover and close it tightly.
- Check the hot water bottle before each use for damage or leakage.

For more information, see  
[www.veiligheid.nl/kruiken](http://www.veiligheid.nl/kruiken)

### Bath

- Bath time? Always check the water temperature first with your elbow or a bath thermometer. The most comfortable temperature for a child is around 37°C.
- A thermostatically controlled tap reduces the risk of a scalding bath.
- Small children do not have an instinctive drowning response, so you do not hear them slide under the water. So always stand or sit next to your child while in the bath. This is also necessary with only a small amount of water and when using a bath seat.

### Hot tea or coffee

- Do not drink hot tea or coffee with your child on your lap.
- Make sure you know where your child is when walking across the room with hot tea or coffee.
- Do not place a pot of tea or coffee on the table and do not use a tablecloth. Need more than just one cup? Use a thermos.



## → avoiding suffocation

Small children put everything in their mouths. Marbles and small toy parts can be dangerous, but grapes, pieces of apple and other foods can also cause them to choke or even suffocate. String, rope and cords can also end up around your child's neck. These are the most important tips to avoid suffocation:

- Keep small objects, rope and cords out of your child's reach.
- Check all toys for damage or loose parts.
- Tidy up toys used by the oldest child first and store them where the youngest cannot get to them.
- Buy a quality dummy with holes in the mouth guard.
- Never hang the dummy from a string around your baby's neck. Attach the dummy to your child's clothing and make sure the cord or ribbon is no longer than 22 centimetres.
- Always stay close to your child when he is eating.
- Make sure your child sits still when eating.

### First aid for choking

If your child starts choking, do the following:

- Try to remove the object carefully from your child's throat using two fingers.
- If this is not possible, place your child on his stomach over your lower arm with his head in your hand. Support his head and give firm back blows with the heel of your hand between the shoulder blades (but not too hard).
- If your child is a little older, place him over your knee with his head lower than his body and give firm blows with the heel of your hand between the shoulder blades.
- If your child is unconscious, immediately call 112 and try once again to give backslaps to remove the object. When a person is unconscious, the muscles relax and the object can more easily be pushed out.

## → bicycling with baby

Want to go for a bike ride together? No problem! You can put an infant car seat or baby safety seat in a bicycle trailer or carrier cycle. Or fasten the car seat to the back of the bike using a special frame.

For more information and tips, see [www.veiligheid.nl/fiets](http://www.veiligheid.nl/fiets)

# checklist → is the nursery safe?

- Your baby is unable to reach curtain or other cords from the bassinet or cot.
- All items you need when changing a nappy are within easy reach.
- Baby ointment, nappy bags and other items are out of your baby's reach, also when dressing your child or changing his nappy.
- The side walls of the cot allow air to pass through. If the bed has bars, they are 4.5 to 6.5 cm apart.
- The bassinet or cot is so far from the heater that your baby cannot get burned.
- The mattress is firm and flat and fits snugly in the cot. There is almost no gap between the mattress and the sides of the bed.
- The nursery has a pleasant temperature (16°C to 18°C) and there is enough fresh air.
- There is no pillow, comforter, bumper or large stuffed animal in the cot.

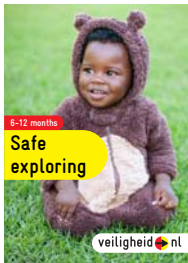
## Were you able to check off everything on the list?

Then you are well on your way to making the nursery as safe as possible for your child. Did you have to skip one or more items? Take care of those aspects right away. In both cases, take a good look around the room with safety in mind.

## want more information?

Want to learn more about how to help your child grow up safely? You'll find lots of useful information at [www.veiligheid.nl](http://www.veiligheid.nl). You can also download the Veilig Groot Worden (growing up safely) app for a quick check as to whether your home is ready for you to bring home your baby.

This brochure is part of the 'Growing Up Safely' series. When your child is around 4 months old, you will be given the 'Safe Exploring' brochure, which covers the following topics:



- In the highchair
- Bicycling with baby
- Safe on the stairs
- Preventing burns (including first aid tips)
- Safe toys
- Checklist: how crawl-safe is your home?

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