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Your Young Child and Emergencies

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The measures you take to make your child comfortable and secure are important. They not only affect your infant's health and safety, but they also are part of the process that shapes life-long attitudes toward the world and self.

You are this small person's first contact with the world. If your small child learns trust from you, your growing child is more likely to be trustworthy. If your small child experiences security from you, your growing child is more likely to face without fear the world of school and playmates that will be first experiences outside the family.

One worry that many new parents share is the possibility of a sudden accident or illness. Some simple measures taken in advance can prevent many emergencies and make others less serious. This publication outlines a few of these precautions.

Know Your Baby's Needs

Do Your Best To Prevent Emergencies

The best way to prevent emergencies is to take your infant or small child to a doctor regularly. Begin these visits as early as possible in your child's life so the doctor will be familiar with the baby's health history and individual needs.

There are a number of sources of medical

advice available to you as a new parent. If you cannot afford the services of a family doctor or a pediatrician, you probably will find that you can take your small child to a well-baby clinic in the town or county where you live. You can locate your nearest clinic by calling the local health department.

Whether your visits are to a doctor in private practice or to a clinic, doctor/nurse teams will check your infant's general health and development, inoculate your child against some contagious diseases, and advise you about personal care to help keep your baby healthy. Get in the habit of writing down a list of questions to ask the doctor during these visits. The answers will help to prevent emergencies.

When you make your baby's first appointment, ask about the cost of an office visit. Find out also how available the doctor is by phone. Small children do not always become ill during regular office hours and you will feel more secure if you know medical advice is available when you really need it.

REMEMBER: To prevent emergencies, no question you have is unimportant or "silly."

ACTION SUGGESTION: Find out what medical services are available for children in your community. Compare the costs and the advantages involved in these.

Be Alert to Illnesses

If your small child seems ill, call the doctor as early in the day as possible. Following is a general list of symptoms that might cause you to check with your infant's doctor.

Unusual fussiness or crying (either in length or sound)

Hoarse crying, rasping breathing, coughing, or continued sneezing

Crying and tugging at an ear

A rash

Unusually red, hot, and dry or pale cold skin; unusual sweating

Unusual lack of appetite

Vomiting

Unusual bowel movements: particularly if these occur frequently, are thin and watery, or contain stains of blood

Unusual sleep habits or tiredness

Runny nose, watery or glassy eyes

Convulsions

Your own hunch that something is unusual

REMEMBER: To prevent emergencies, call the doctor when your child looks or behaves in an unusual way. The key word is UNUSUAL.

ACTION SUGGESTION: Ask your doctor what he will need to learn from you in order to advise you by telephone. Obtain a rectal thermometer and learn to take your infant's temperature.

Be Prepared for an Emergency

In case of sudden illness or accident, call your baby's doctor at any hour.

If you cannot reach your regular doctor, take your baby to the emergency ward of the nearest hospital (if possible, have someone call to tell them you are on the way), or call the police or fire department for help or transportation within minutes (always give your name and address).

REMEMBER: When making an emergency telephone call, your name and address are vital bits of information.

ACTION SUGGESTION: Learn the fastest route to the nearest hospital. Look up the following telephone numbers and paste them up by your phone:

Hospital:

Police:

Fire Department:

Poison Control Center:

Doctor Office:

Home:

What Can You Do About Emergencies?

Safeguard Against Sickness

To be healthy, your small child needs safe nourishing food, fresh air and exercise, and regular sleep. Your loving attention and affection are important to your infant's physical and mental health. Studies of infants through years of observations have shown that babies need affection not only to stay physically healthy but to grow into bright and intelligent adults. Other studies have shown that the loving attention that expresses itself in telling stories, answering questions, and generally providing a stimulating environment for growth can bring up a small child's I.Q. by as much as 20 points.

Protect your infant from contact with people who are sick. To do this, be aware of and avoid sickness that is "going around the neighborhood." Be sure, however, to mention neighborhood illnesses to your doctor if your baby seems ill. NEVER use someone else's medicine for your baby. Only your doctor is qualified to recommend safe dosages for your child based upon his or her expert knowledge and your baby's age, size, symptoms, and personal health history. Always follow your doctor's instructions carefully. This is particularly important if your child's medicine is to be both effective and safe.

REMEMBER: Small children need affection and attention to be healthy and bright.

Shield baby from contact with *known* illness.

ACTION SUGGESTION: Check yourself. How much affection and attention time did your baby receive yesterday? Make a week-long chart showing the number of hours you talked, sang, played, and showed physical affection to your infant.

Take Precautions To Prevent Accidents

Most deaths in young children are results of preventable accidents. In the process of growing and exploring, your baby does something new every day, so it is important that you remember to expect your baby to do the unexpected.

Never leave your baby untended even when he or she is asleep.

Never leave your baby when he or she is on an unrailed bed, bath table, or other raised furniture. Even very small babies manage somehow to wiggle and kick to the edge and fall over.

Never leave your baby when he or she is around water (bath, lake, pond, pail, or puddle). A tiny child can drown in a few inches of water.

Never leave your baby in a car or carriage while you shop.

Keep stairs clear and use handrails when you are carrying your baby. Place an immovable barrier or folding gate with a safety latch in front of places of danger.

Select a baby highchair with broad spaced legs so that it will not tip easily.

Put knives, scissors, and matches safely out of reach. Make a habit of turning pan handles to the center of your stove.

- Put those pretty dangling tablecloths away until your child is older. One yank from your tiny child and all the contents on top of the table may land on top of his or her head.

Medicines and cleaning supplies, like bleaches, detergents, rust removers; pins, buttons, and other small objects should be safely locked away. Remember, babies will put anything small in their mouths.

Do not give your baby toys smaller than his or her mouth. Collapsed balloons, hard candy, nuts, and popcorn are deadly chokeables. Until baby chews well, even hard crackers and "snackables" like potato chips and corn chips may cause your child to choke.

Use paint marked "Conforms to American Standard Z 66.1—1955. For use on surfaces which might be chewed by children." Some paints contain poisonous lead.

Never let your baby play with a plastic bag, plastic wrap, or any similar item which might cause suffocation.

Insist on non-inflammable clothing and bedding for your child.

Check play areas and toys for such things as sharp corners, shaping wires, loose buttons, ribbons.

Belt your baby in a car seat or car bed whether you drive or ride as a passenger. Safety belts for children should be bolted to the floor to prevent sudden plunges forward into the dashboard or window.

Shade your baby's head and eyes against direct sun rays. Delicate young skin burns easily so at first sunbathing should last only a few minutes.

Do not sleep with your baby or tie baby into bed. Cover electrical outlets, repair electrical cords and keep electrical appliances and cords high out of baby's reach.

Young children play in driveways and streets. Know where your child is. And the best way to know this is always to be near.

REMEMBER: Expect the unexpected.
Even very small babies wriggle into trouble.
Never leave your small child unattended.

ACTION SUGGESTION: Make a project of rearranging your home for baby safety. Get down on your child's level (on your stomach or hands and knees). What can you reach? What dangers do you see?

Check with your fire department for a "child's room alert" decal and place it in your child's bedroom window. Firemen, seeing it, would give this room priority attention in case of fire.

Know What To Do If an Emergency Occurs

GET MEDICAL HELP AT ONCE for choking, poisoning, severe burns, heavy bleeding, eye injury, and head injuries accompanied by paleness, drowsiness, or vomiting.

If possible, take a course in first aid. Keep a book on first aid handy to check before you attempt any treatment. If you do give emergency treatment, check afterward with your doctor.

REMEMBER: Professional medical help is as close as your phone. Know where your first aid reference is at all times.

ACTION SUGGESTION: Take a first aid course.
Obtain a first aid book and go through it carefully.
Post a poison antidote chart in your kitchen.

UNTIL MEDICAL HELP IS AVAILABLE

A small child who is choking may be turned up-siddedown and held briefly by the ankles while the child is tapped sharply between the shoulder blades two or three times.

If an older child (over three or four) or an adult is choking, the "Hug of Life" may be used. This is simply a sharp hug from the back and directly under the rib carriage which forces the breath to be suddenly and rapidly expelled. Often, the air rushing out will move whatever is caught in the throat and causing the choking.

Apply cold water or ice immediately to a burn.
NEVER butter or grease.

Wash small cuts with soap and water and apply a sterile bandage. (This may be a freshly ironed cloth.)

Hold a heavily bleeding limb higher than the heart and press directly on and above the wound. (Above in this case means on the side nearest the heart). It is of course best to press on the wound with a sterile bandage; but, if this is not immediately available, press anyway—with your bare hand, if necessary.

Do not touch an injured eye or let your infant rub it. In general, get medical advice, preferably from an eye specialist, at once.

Acid in an Eye: Wash the face, eyelids and eye very thoroughly, using plain water or a mild solution made with one teaspoon of baking soda in a quart of water. Turn the child's head to one side so that the solution does not run into the other eye, hold up the upper lid and gently flush the eye from the inner corner outward with the water solution. Do this for *at least five minutes*.

Alkali (cleaning products, bleaches) in an eye: Wash the face, eyelids and eye. Turn the child's head to one side, hold up the upper lid and gently flush the eye from the inner corner outward for at least 15 minutes. Use PLAIN WATER.

An affected eye should always have attention. Injury may occur to the eye over a period of time with really serious damage resulting. After giving first aid, place a sterile dressing over the eye and seek expert medical help.

If poison is swallowed, give the victim milk *unless it is* toilet bowl cleaner. Call for advice *right away*.

Call your doctor, poison control center, rescue squad, or hospital. Post these telephone numbers by your phone. *Tell them what the poison is.*

Keep syrup of Ipecac in your home but use it only on advice of a physician. Wash poison from eyes and skin with tap water. Remove the victim from exposure to poisonous fumes.

Do not move or let the baby move a limb you think may be broken. Tie the leg or arm to something like a rolled-up pillow or smooth board to help keep it still on the way to professional medical help.

REMEMBER: Keep cool and look up the proper thing to do.

Get medical help at once.

ACTION SUGGESTION: Discuss emergency procedures with any person who shares the responsibility of caring for your small child. Find out what emergency supplies should be kept on hand and how to use them. Prepare a home first aid kit. Contact your local American Red Cross. Arrangements can be made for a first aid course no matter where you live.

MOUTH-TO-MOUTH RESUSCITATION

NEVER GIVE MOUTH-TO-MOUTH RESUSCITATION TO A CHILD WHO IS BREATHING.

Open the air passage by raising the child's neck and tilting his or her head way back. Then keep the infant's chin pressed upward all the time, to keep the passages open.

You can breathe into the nose and mouth of a child at once. (With an adult, breathe into either the mouth or nose, keeping the other pinched shut.)

Breathe into the child, using only mild force—a small child's lungs can't hold your entire breath. Remove your lips, allowing the chest to contract while you inhale your next breath. Breathe into the victim again.

Each of your breaths goes into the child with some lifesaving oxygen. Use slightly quicker shorter breaths than you normally would for an adult.

REMEMBER: This publication is too brief to make you an expert. The time to obtain a medical adviser for your baby is now.

ACTION SUGGESTION: If your small child does not have a regular doctor, call one now and arrange a visit.

Call your county Extension home agent and ask for other material that will help you to raise a happy, healthy child. Her telephone number is listed under County Government in your county seat city.