



Baby Buzz

**.....all you need to know
about your baby's first year**

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Baby Buzz Starter Checklist

Nursery

- Crib (1)
- Crib Mattress (1)
- Changing Table (1)
- Changing Table Pad (1)
- Receiving Blankets (3)
- Stroller Blankets (1)
- Swaddle Blankets (3)
- Bedding Sets (2)
- Extra Fitted Crib Sheets (2)
- Travel cot (1)

Optional

- Changing Table Pad Cover (2) - optional
- Nappy Bin & Refill (1)
- Sleep Positioner (1)
- Mosquito Net (1 for cot and 1 for camping cot)
- Sleeping bag (1 for summer, 1 for winter)
- Nightlight (1)

Clothing

- Long-sleeved Baby Bodies (6)
- Short - sleeved Baby Bodies (6)
- Long-sleeved Baby Tees (4)
- Short - sleeved Baby Tees (4)
- Booties (3)
- Skull Caps (6)
- Socks (6)

Out & About

- Infant car seat or convertible car seat (1)
- Nappy Bag (1)
- Pram (1)
- Baby Carrier (1)

Feeding

- Bottles (6)
- Bottle Sterilizer (1)
- Bottler Warmer (1)
- Bottle Brush (1)
- Breast Pump (1)
- Breast Pads (2)
- Burp Clothes (12)
- Nursing Pillow (1)
- Baby Plate & Spoon Set (2)
- Bibs (4)
- Foodmill (1)
- Highchair (1)
- Dummies (2)
- Dummy Chain (1)

Bathroom

- Barrier Cream (2)
- Baby Lotion (2)
- Baby Powder (2)
- Sunscreen (1)
- Nappies
- Wet Wipes
- Hooded Towel (4)
- Infant Bath Seat or Bath Tub (1)
- Bath Thermometer (1)
- Bath Toys
- Potty (1)
- Trainer Seat (1)
- Hair Brush Set (1)
- Nail Care Set (1)

Health & Safety

- Medicine Dropper (1)
- Nasal Aspirator (1)
- Teethers (2)
- Thermometer (1)
- Baby Monitor (1)
- Humidifier (1)
- Cabinet Locks (6)
- Outlet Caps (20)

Toys & Activities

- Mobile (1)
- Play Mat (1)
- Pram Chain (1)
- Clutching Toys (3)

Suggestion on what to bring to hospital

Your essential hospital bag – for YOU:

- Pajamas (with buttons in front for breastfeeding)
- Dressing gown
- Slippers or comfortable flat shoes
- Disposable pants or cotton pants (loos fitting)
- Support feeding bras
- Personal toiletries and 2 face cloths, hair band or something to tie back your hair
- Nipple cream
- Breast pads
- Maternity pads
- Loose, comfortable clothes
- ID, (Medical Aid Membership card)
- Watch, pen, notebook, camera, book, music (optional)
- Snacks and drinks

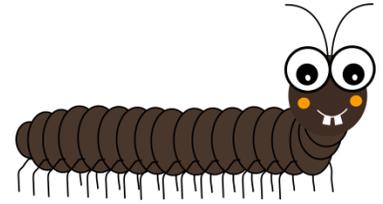
Your essential hospital bag – for your baby:

- Baby clothes (4-5 sets) warm clothes for the winter season (make sure everything is washed before use)
- Baby blankets
- Newborn disposable nappies
- Toiletries for your baby (shampoo, soap, body cream, Vaseline, bum cream)
- Purple spirits
- Cotton wool
- Face cloths
- Dummy
- Baby Bottle (if not breast feeding)

Going home:

- The baby car seat
- Extra set of clothes for you and the baby

Shonga's suggestions for: Beds



It is estimated that babies spend as much as eighteen hours a day in their crib during their first year, which means that you and the crib are pretty much going to be your baby's whole world. You'll want a bed that fits your style, but you'll also want something comfortable and safe.

Whether your baby goes straight to a crib or spends a few months in a bassinet, cradle, or co-sleeper is up to you. **Most children end up in a crib eventually, though, so if you only want to buy one piece of furniture, that's the one.** There are also great multistage options that take you from a bassinet to a crib to a toddler bed with just one purchase.

Cribs come in a lot of different styles, with all sorts of materials and finishes to choose from, so whatever look you're going for, it's easier than ever to find something you love.

Whatever style of bed you choose, avoid using hand-me-downs. Newer models are safer because safety standards have evolved, and older cribs might have rails that are farther apart than is considered safe.

Your basic choice

Cribs

The crib is the staple of the nursery, the one piece of furniture that everything else is designed around. A crib that converts to a toddler bed can be well worth the investment because it adds another two to four years of use to your purchase.

Bassinets and cradles

A smaller bed for your baby's first months—either a bassinet or a cradle that rocks—can add a nice, romantic touch to the nursery, though is not a necessity by any means. One big upside is that they're small enough to move around the house, which means your baby can nap in any room (including your bedroom, making nighttime feedings more convenient).

Co-sleepers

If you want to keep your child in the same bed as you, a co-sleeper is a small bed that either lies on top of your bed or attaches to the side of it, with sturdy sides to keep you from rolling over onto your infant while you sleep. The on-top-of-the-bed style can also double as a portable crib for parents on the go.

Portable cribs

Portable cribs can be a lifesaver for frequent travelers, and they're also a good option for the grandparents' houses. Some fold and unfold and can also be used as everyday playpens. Newer options work more like pop-up tents, and while they don't double as playpens, they're smaller and more portable and double as a UV-protected tent for outdoors.

General Guidance

Cradles, bassinets and co-sleepers. The important thing to know about these three types of beds is that they're all entirely optional. They do have a certain romantic appeal and take up less space, but in just three to six months, your child will need something bigger. None of these comes in a standard size, so if it doesn't include a mattress, make sure you can find one that fits.

Portable cribs. When shopping for a portable crib, make sure it's lightweight enough to suit your needs, easy use. An included travel case, bag, or at least a handle is a simple, must-have feature to ensure portability.

Mattresses. Just like with your own bed, you're going to want a good mattress to put in the crib. Almost all cribs use standard-sized crib mattresses, and the general rule is that firmer is better. In fact, some studies have linked softer mattresses to SIDS.

Another thing to consider is your baby's reaction to the mattress. Allergies in infants are constantly increasing and because babies spend so much time in their crib at the beginning it is extremely important to choose the right material for a mattress. Choose a material like Health-Tex, which is a water-proof breathable membrane that behaves like your skin. It acts as a barrier to allergens, it allows the transfer of water vapour molecules so that your baby does not sweat like on plastic and it is water-proof offering protection to the mattress.

If your baby is hyper allergic and even reacts to the Health-Tex material, please talk to your Baby Buzz team – we have a range of organic mattresses that we can order for you from Europe.

There are two basic types of mattress: foam and innerspring. A good foam mattress is heavier and, when pushed on, bounces back quickly. An innerspring mattress should have a coil count of at least 150 and should be firm in the center as well as the edges.

Features to look for

- **Crib rails.** Cribs have two types of rails to choose from: fixed rails or drop rails. Fixed-rail cribs are generally sturdier, but drop rails can be lowered to make it easier to get baby in and out. Just be sure to test drop-rail cribs before buying to make sure the sides are easy to adjust.
- **Convertibility.** Today, most cribs convert into at least a toddler bed, and some also cover the bassinet stage, as well.
- **Adjustable mattress height.** All cribs have three or four mattress-height settings. The idea is to keep the mattress higher at first so it's easier to reach into the crib, then lower the mattress as your baby becomes more mobile to keep him from jumping or climbing out. Make sure it doesn't require a degree in crib design to change the mattress settings—you'll do it up to three times for each child!
- **Under-crib drawers.** Some manufacturers offer these as an option, and they can be a great storage solution for a crowded nursery. If your crib doesn't come with built-in drawers, you can always buy storage boxes or baskets to put below.
- **Breathability.** Make sure your crib, bassinet, or co-sleeper has a breathable construction and enough room for your child. This not only minimizes sweaty heads and improves sleep but is also a SIDS consideration.
- **Material.** Cribs are generally made out of, so you can choose according to your preference. Another import factor to take into consideration is the paint used for the crib, since a lot of health related problems and allergies have been directly linked to the reaction on wrong paints used. All paints used for the cribs sold in Baby Buzz are water based, lead-free and non-toxic. They are completely baby safe and eco friendly.

Stage considerations

- Cradles, bassinets, and co-sleepers are really only options for newborns and infants. Depending on the size of both your baby and the bed, these options will only be useful for three to six months.
- Cribs can be used from day one, and most children stay in a crib until sometime after their second birthday. A sign your baby is about to outgrow his crib is when he starts trying to climb out.

- Cribs that convert into toddler beds can be used for five years or more, depending on the size of the child. These beds use the same mattress as the crib and include a protective bar to keep the sleeping child from falling out of bed.
- Portable cribs may be used for sleeping on the road for as long as you keep your child in a crib. Once your child has outgrown her crib—and is still learning to sleep without falling out of bed—you'll have to find a new solution when traveling, like an attachable guardrail or the old pillows-on-the-floor trick.

Usage Tips

- Remove all pillows, stuffed animals, duvets, quilts, big blankets, and even teethingers when baby is asleep or unattended.
- If you have a drop-rail crib, always remember to keep the side pulled up and locked in place when your baby is in the crib.
- Crib mattresses should fit snugly. The rule of thumb is no more than two adult fingers should be able to fit between the crib and mattress.
- On a regular basis, check your crib for any loose screws, bolts, brackets, chipped or peeling paint, splinters, or broken edges.
- Keep your crib safely out of reach of dangling cords, lamp shades, heaters, and anything else that might pose a risk.
- Make sure there's enough breathing room in your cradle, bassinet, or co-sleeper that your baby won't get overheated.
- Portable cribs should not be used on a permanent basis; they don't have the durability for safe long-term use.

Additional Information

The risks and rewards of co-sleeping

Sharing a bed with your infant—or co-sleeping—is seen as quite controversial. Supporters believe that a parent's bed is just where an infant belongs; opponents believe it's unsafe.

The benefits of co-sleeping? It encourages breast-feeding, makes it easier to get the baby to sleep, provides better sleep for both mom and baby, and encourages bonding, especially for working parents who don't get to see their child during the day.

The arguments against co-sleeping are mostly safety related. The big one is the danger of suffocation if a parent inadvertently rolls over onto the baby. But there are also concerns about the baby falling asleep facedown on a softer bed or getting stuck between the mattress and the headboard, wall, or nightstand. Some of these concerns can be mitigated with the use of a co-sleeper, which goes on top of your bed and has rigid walls, creating a smaller space that's safer for your child.

Sleeping safety and SIDS

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the diagnosis given for the sudden and unexplained death of an infant under one year of age. SIDS is the leading cause of death in children under the age of one, and most cases occur between two and four months of age.

SIDS is sometimes called "crib death" because most cases of SIDS occur when a baby is in a crib, sleeping. Cribs don't cause SIDS, but other aspects of an infant's sleeping environment have been associated with an increased risk. For example, bedding that bunches up around a baby's nose or mouth can cause dangerous re-breathing of oxygen-depleted air.



It's important to make sure that your baby's crib is breathable and that you don't leave unnecessary items in the crib with your child. Other than a fitted sheet and properly installed bumper, the only thing that should be in the crib with your baby is a lightweight and breathable blanket.

In fact, many pediatrics prefer a wearable blanket or sleep sack to keep a baby warm at night, replacing loose blankets in the crib and lessening the likelihood of bedding ending up over or around the baby's face.

The South African Pediatric Association says that the safest position for babies to sleep in, to reduce the likelihood of SIDS, is on their backs. If your child likes to roll over in her sleep, consider a sleep positioner that goes next to the hips to keep her properly in place. Some styles also include an inclined back support that keeps the baby's head slightly elevated and can help with digestion or breathing when a baby has a cold. Sleep positioners should not be used once your child can roll over independently.

There is mounting evidence that suggests some babies are more vulnerable to SIDS because of abnormalities found in the part of the brain that controls breathing and waking during sleep. So, while no one knows for sure whether the measures listed above can prevent SIDS, they definitely protect against suffocation and are important precautions to take.

Bizzy's suggestions for: Nursery Linen



You'd think making up your baby's bed would be approximately the same as making your own. But there are differences, from the things you add to the things you take away.

Probably the biggest difference is what you won't use on your baby's bed. No top sheets, no quilts, no pillows. And don't let that beautiful comforter and pillow sham sold with your crib set fool you; they should only be used for decorative purposes. The only things your baby needs are listed below. Anything else poses a risk of SIDS and suffocation and should be removed anytime the baby is in the crib.

That doesn't mean you can't dress up your crib a little, and there are all sorts of styles and colors of linens to choose from. This is a fun, no-pressure decision—and a chance to express your master decorating skills and exceptional taste!

Your basic choice

- **Fitted sheets**

A fitted sheet is really your only crib necessity. Most mattresses—and thus most sheets—come in a standard size, but specialty mattresses will require their own sheets. Some manufacturers offer sheets with an elastic band that goes under the mattress to hold them snugly in place.

- **Waterproof mattress pads**

Regardless of mattress choice, you'll want to add a waterproof mattress pad under your fitted sheet. It will add a comfortable layer of padding to a mattress already encased in waterproof plastic lining and will help protect premium organic mattresses (which aren't lined) against middle-of-the-night accidents.

- **Bumpers**

Bumpers are more than just decorative: they provide a padded layer that keeps little baby parts from slipping through open rails. While crib styles and safety standards have evolved and bumpers are no longer a necessity, some parents think the crib doesn't look quite fully dressed without one. When your child can pull himself up, you'll want to remove the bumper so he can't use it to climb out.

Features to look for

- **Snug fitting.** For safety's sake, choose sheets and bumpers that fit snugly.
- **Washable.** Make sure everything's machine-washable, even pads.
- **Healthy.** Babies can spend as much as 70 percent of their first year sleeping, so make your crib a gentle and healthy environment by choosing organic and chemical-free bedding.

Usage Tips

- If you're going to spend the extra money for chemical-free, antiallergen, or organic linens, make sure you also invest in chemical-free, sensitive laundry detergent so you're not adding the chemicals back in.
- Do yourself a favor and have more than one set of the essentials—especially sheets, pads, and blankets. Accidents will happen, and you'll be washing often.

Accessories

Sleep positioners. Keep your baby in the recommended position—on his back—with these bumpers that are placed next to the hips: the bumpers keep your baby from rolling onto his front accidentally but should not be used once he starts rolling over on purpose.

Wearable blankets. Bedding that bunches up around a baby's face can cause dangerous re-breathing of oxygen-depleted air, a possible cause of SIDS. Wearable blankets replace loose blankets in the crib, lessening the likelihood of infants getting blankets over or around their face.

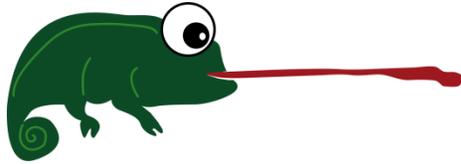
Building your bedding

Once you have all the pieces in place, how do you put them all together? Start with your waterproof mattress pad, then the fitted sheet, which should fit snugly and be completely tucked in.

If you've chosen a bumper, there are special considerations to keep in mind for safety's sake. Tuck your bumper between the mattress and the side of the crib so that only five or seven cm is sticking out. (In other words, don't gently set the bumper on top of the mattress like you see in most stores and photographs of beautiful cribs.) This not only improves the airflow at baby level, it also minimizes the likelihood of little hands and feet getting caught between bumper and mattress. And be sure to attach the bumper securely so that it can't come lose.

Bumpers tie on to crib rails, so it's a little trickier with cribs that have solid ends. You'll need to start and end your ties on a rail side of the crib. Many people who choose this style of crib just skip the bumpers.

What to do with the lovely comforter and pillow sham that came with your crib set? Quilts and comforters can be used as play mats on the floor, hung on the wall, or hung over the crib railing when the baby's not in the crib. And pillows can go on your rocker but should never be left in the crib with your baby. Just because you've got them doesn't mean you have to use them! The only thing your baby should have loose in the crib is a lightweight breathable blanket.



Chamy's suggestions for: Car seats

A car seat is the only item you're legally required to buy—no ifs, ands, or buts. Although the use of car seats cannot necessarily prevent an accident, it has been found to be the number one method to prevent injuries and it reduces fatality by 60%. The sad reality is that only about 35% of parents in Namibia are actually ensuring that their children are travelling in age appropriate car seats.

So there's no question whether you're getting one; the question is just what kind and how many. We might as well go ahead and break it to you; you'll probably end up having to buy three separate car seats to cover three different sizes of child: an infant seat, a toddler seat, and a booster seat. The only exceptions are if you buy a convertible car seat that covers two stages, allowing you to buy just two seats, or if you have a newer-model car that comes with its own booster seat, thus cutting out one of the purchases.

This is one of the few categories that the experts unanimously recommend not taking a second-hand one to save some expense. Car seat technology is always changing, and since it's a safety issue, you'll want the most up-to-date style available.

Your basic choice

There are four basic types of car seats, and the difference between them has to do with what size your child is:

Infant seat

Your infant car seat is designed for approximately the first six to nine months. The primary feature of infant car seats is that they're portable, thanks to their detachable base, which means you can get sleeping babies in and out of the car without waking them. These seats are designed for rear-facing installation only. Yes, this means the child will be in the backseat facing away from you, which can be hard, but it's much safer.

Toddler seat

This is the car seat you'll need from around six months of age up to four years, or 18kgs, whichever comes first. Specialists recommend keeping car seats rear-facing until your baby reaches one year of age. After that, these car seats can be installed facing forward.

Booster seat

The booster seat is for kids who are too big for a toddler seat but too small to be released from car-seatdom altogether. They get to use the car's seat belt system just like the grown-ups; the booster seat just provides a little extra protection—and a little bit of a height boost. The seats are designed to be used from the ages of four to eight and from 14 to 45kgs.

Convertible

Remember how we said you might be able to get away with just two car seats? The key would be to buy a convertible car seat that covers two of the three stages. There are two types: one that combines the infant seat and toddler seat, and one that combines the toddler seat and booster seat.

General guidance

All the different combinations might start to make your head spin (or is that just morning sickness?), so here's a quick synopsis of your options.

Infant seat, toddler seat, and booster seat. By buying all three seats separately, you get the best features of each stage, but it does end up costing a little more.

Infant/toddler convertible plus booster seat. This combination saves money since you're only buying two seats, but you lose the portability of a dedicated infant seat.

Infant seat plus toddler/booster convertible. This combination also saves money since you're only buying two seats, but there's a space trade-off since the toddler/booster convertibles are typically a lot bigger than a booster seat.

The good news is, you only need to make one choice to start with, and that's whether to buy an infant seat or an infant/toddler convertible seat.

Parents who will take the baby in the car only occasionally might opt for the convertible seat at this stage. Here's why: the infant-seat stage only lasts around six or seven months—nine tops. This means that if you don't drive much, you'll only enjoy the portability of the infant seat a handful of times—which probably won't be worth the extra expense. But parents who are in and out of the car all the time will probably prefer to spend the money on a standard infant seat.

Whatever you decide, a car seat is one purchase you shouldn't skimp on. Your primary consideration should be the car seat's safety ratings; then you can factor in ease of use, cost, and style to make your final decision. The car you drive will also impact your decision. If you have a newer car with a high safety rating, you don't need to worry quite as much, but if you have an older model, you'll want the biggest, safest car seat money can buy.

Features to look for

- **Good safety rating.** Every seat on the market meets the minimum safety standards, but you'll want the safest car seat you can find, especially if you have an older car. Generally, more expensive models are more expensive because of their extra attention to safety features like head cushioning and side-impact protection.
- **Easy installation.** Make sure the car seat is reasonably easy to install with confidence.
- **Five-point harness.** These secure your child in place at the shoulders, hips, and between the legs for maximum security and come standard in every car seat. If you do use a hand-me-down seat, make sure it has this important safety feature.
- **Front harness adjusters.** Adjusting a harness in the back is like doing it with your eyes closed, so make sure you can adjust it from the front—especially considering you'll have to do it every time you put the baby in the car.
- **Removable/washable fabric and pads.** Unless you bought the car seat just to spring your baby from the maternity ward, it's going to get dirty, so look for removable and washable pads and upholstery.
- **infant car seat**
You've already read about all the features you should look for in a car seat, but here are some guidelines that are specific to the infant car seat.
- **Separate car-seat base.** This is one of the key features of an infant car seat and what makes it portable. You install the base and from there, you just click the seat in and out of the base.
- **Weight.** One of the big advantages of the infant car seat is that it's smaller and more portable. To take advantage of this portability, make sure the one you select is light enough for you to carry.

- **Stroller compatibility.** To take convenience and portability one step further, you might want to consider an infant car seat that's compatible with your stroller, or even get a universal system. Instead of trying to transfer your sleeping baby to a stroller without waking her up—good luck with that—you can just pop the car seat into the stroller base and be on your way!
- **Cushioning.** In the beginning, your newborn will seem tiny and fragile in a car seat. Whether you buy a seat with lots of padding or buy separate inserts, you'll definitely want some padding, so factor it into your pricing up front.

Usage tips

For car seats, most usage issues are related to safety and installation. Here are the things you should keep in mind when using your car seat.

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation; if your car seat moves more than 2 cm in any direction, it's not installed correctly.
- Don't be shy about asking for help installing your car seat.
- Car seats should always be installed in the backseat (the exceptions, of course, are pickups and other cars without backseats).
- When possible, position the car seat in the center of the backseat, which is the safest place in a vehicle.
- For safety purposes, never use a car seat in a seat equipped with air bags. The force with which they deploy is too strong. If your only option is a seat with an air bag, you'll need to have the air bag disabled; if you don't know how to do this, ask your mechanic.
- The carry handle on an infant car seat usually swings from an upright position for carrying into a downward position when in the car. Remember to place the handle in the vehicle position before each trip.
- Specialists recommend keeping your car seat rear-facing until your child reaches one year of age and at least 14kgs.
- Adjust your seat straps at the right height. In general, straps should be snug. For rear-facing seats, the shoulder straps should be at shoulder height or slightly lower. For front-facing seats, the shoulder straps should be slightly above the shoulders. If you can slide one finger between the baby and the strap, you've got it in just right.
- Send in your manufacturer's registration card to ensure that you're notified of any recalls.

Accessories

Car seat insert for newborns. A newborn can look awfully small and vulnerable in a car seat, but a padded insert can keep your baby extra snug. Many car seats come with more than enough padding, though, so wait until you've made your car seat purchase.

Car seat cover. Love the seat but hate the fabric? Or has your beautiful car seat suffered one too many juice incidents? A spiffy new car seat cover can add new life—and style—for a lot less money than buying a replacement.

Extra infant car seat bases. If you have more than one car, go wild! Equip each vehicle the baby rides in with its own car seat base. Then you never have to worry about re-installing the base, and you can just click the seat in and out.

Seat protector. Consider buying this accessory to protect your vehicle's seat from the wear and tear of having a car seat in place—especially if you have leather seats. Some car seats can't be installed correctly with a seat protector under them, but most can. Save your receipt just in case.

Bizzy's suggestions for: Diaper bags



There are people who, before giving birth, would never in a million years think, "I'd like to carry a great big bag with duckies all over it!" And yet, when it comes time to choose a diaper bag, they'll choose a pastel bag with a cartoony pattern that they tolerate at best.

If you really, really want a diaper bag in a duck motif, then more power to you. But don't choose the pattern for your kid—they're not the ones who have to carry it. Choose something that reflects your personal style. There are so many diaper bags to choose from, there's no good reason not to have a bag you really love to carry.

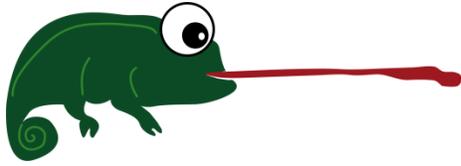
Diaper bags these days come in plenty of cool, contemporary styles that are specially designed for your convenience. Most include an insulated bottle holder, an easy-access changing pad compartment, and probably even the changing pad itself—not to mention little hooks to secure dummies and smaller items. Some even include an exterior opening for diaper wipes so that you can access them without opening your bag. All of these features help make it possible to maneuver around the bag with one hand, even while you're holding a sleeping child.

If you really want to express your style, you might consider a bag that wasn't specifically designed to be a diaper bag. Really, you can turn any bag into a diaper bag if it has a roomy interior compartment and good pockets—especially if you add in diaper-bag accessories, such as an insulated bottle holder.

Features to look for

- **Changing pad.** Most diaper bags come with a changing pad. If you're buying a bag that doesn't have one, make sure there's an opening big enough to store one in, because you'll definitely need a clean, comfortable surface to do your changing.
- **Cargo space.** If you're a pack rat and want everything with you all the time, you'll want a sturdy, high-capacity diaper bag. If you're a minimalist who wants to carry just the necessities, you'll want light, airy, and efficient. Many first-time parents want to be prepared for anything, but most will opt for the less-is-more route as their baby becomes a toddler.
- **Easy (and quiet) access.** Avoid complicated latches. When you're holding a fussy baby in one hand and fishing around in a diaper bag with the other hand, you'll appreciate the importance of easy access. A common misconception is that Velcro closures are the ultimate solution. While they are awfully handy, they can also wake up a sleeping baby—and neither of you will like that much. Look for magnetic or other quiet-closure solutions for your easy-access compartments.
- **Insulated bottle holder.** Many diaper bags come with one, but if yours doesn't, or you've chosen a nontraditional diaper bag, you can buy one separately to make sure your bag is properly equipped. Either way, you'll want one of these to keep your baby's bottle at the right temperature.

Stroller compatibility. Make sure you have at least one good bag that works with your stroller. It doesn't have to match, but it should fit over your stroller handle, or at least in the storage bin, so you don't need three hands to walk the baby.



Chamy's suggestions for: Strollers

There's no rule saying you have to have a stroller, but it's hard to imagine not having one if you're ever planning to leave the house. And as your child starts to feel more and more like a large and wiggly sack of potatoes, you'll really appreciate the extra mobility.

This is one of your bigger-ticket items, so you'll want to make sure you pick the right one. And there are a lot more choices on the market than there used to be in terms of style, price, and function. In the past, you just picked the upholstery you liked best and made sure it rolled in a forward direction. Nowadays, buying a stroller is more like buying a high-performance bicycle or other piece of equipment—which is why more dads get involved in stroller purchases than any other category of baby products.

More and more stroller models are trying to be all things to all people—the one that does it all. This means that the different categories of stroller have started to overlap. The problem is, by trying to do it all, they don't do their original job quite as well. A lightweight, collapsible stroller might add fully reclining seats so that it can be used in the infant stage, but suddenly it's not as lightweight or collapsible anymore.

Sound complicated? Well, it is. But once you have an understanding of the different types, their benefits, and how that matches up to your needs as a parent, you can really start to decide on what you want.

Your basic choice

- **Full-size strollers** These are the larger, sturdier, and more expensive strollers, also referred to as standard strollers or prams. Most have a bassinet stage, allowing the baby to lie flat, as well as a reclining seat for when the child is old enough to sit. Usually fully loaded, these strollers are all about adaptability and the child's comfort.
- **Umbrella strollers** These folding strollers are called umbrella strollers for their curved, umbrella-like handles and easy, single-handed folding. They're the best option for a high-quality, lightweight, durable stroller that's ideal for hopping in and out of cars, traveling, or navigating small spaces. The umbrella stroller is most parents' must-have second stroller—and for most, it's the preferred choice for the toddler stage.
- **Travel systems** Similar to the universal system, travel systems have a universal frame that can hold a car seat, but also come with a simple toddler seat that will work as a lightweight stroller until the child is around four years old. Sometimes referred to as "convenience strollers," they're also similar to an umbrella stroller, although often not quite as lightweight or durable.
- **Joggers** These three-wheeled strollers are aerodynamically designed for the serious runner. Made for either trail or street running, they're relatively lightweight and include a hand brake and a safety strap for the parent's wrist. They tend to be a bit less maneuverable in small spaces than an all-terrain, as a trade-off to their more aerodynamic design.
- **Doubles and triples** You can only push one stroller at a time—but what if you have more than one child? For twins, or if you have more than one stroller-aged child, a double stroller is a good solution. One style is a side-by-side stroller, which is good for togetherness but bad for fitting through the checkout line at the store. The other style is an in-line stroller that places one child in front of the other. Both are available in a lightweight umbrella style or a sturdier full-size style. If you have triplets, you can even get a three-seater.

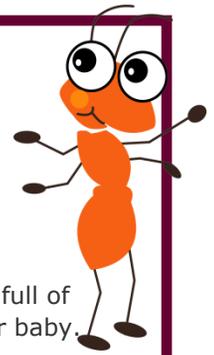
Features to look for

- **Car seat compatibility.** If you're going to spend a lot on a full-size or all-terrain stroller, look for one that's compatible with your car seat, especially if you'll be in and out of your car a lot.
- **Adjustable handlebars.** Handlebar-height adjustability can be among the more important features for comfortable use over time, particularly for parents with very different heights.
- **Type of handlebar.** While most full-size strollers have one straight handlebar, most umbrella strollers have two curved handles (much like umbrellas). The straight handlebar makes navigating a little easier, but the two curved bars make the stroller more collapsible, so consider the trade-off.
- **Leg room (yours!).** Spend some time testing how comfortable you are striding behind different strollers, and make sure you have a good fit. The size of the wheels, angle of the seat, and handlebar positions all affect the legroom for the parent.
- **Expandability.** Some strollers offer multi-baby or multistage options that will allow you to keep adding to your growing family with your first investment.
- **Durability.** With any luck, you might be able to use your stroller for more than one child. Be sure to consider wheel construction, as plastic wheels can begin to stick and become difficult to maneuver over time.
- **Washability.** Make sure you consider the stickiness factor and get a stroller that's easy to clean.
- **Cargo space.** Just about every stroller comes with a storage basket, though the size and style can vary almost as much as the strollers themselves. Decide if you're a pack rat or a minimalist, and choose your stroller accordingly.
- **Brakes.** This safety feature keeps your stroller from rolling away when you're not moving. Look for brakes that are conveniently located, for when your hands are full.
- **Locking front wheels.** Normally, wheels are made to rotate from side to side independently for maximum maneuverability, but many four-wheel, all-terrain strollers will have front wheels that lock off so that they roll together, allowing it to operate more like a jogger and making it easier to go in a straight line.
- **Adjustable seat position.** In most full-size and all-terrain strollers, the seat will have multiple positions so that your child can sit straight up, recline slightly, or stretch out for a nap while you walk.

Usage tips

- Always use the harness system. When your baby gets older, it's tempting to let her sit in the seat without the belt on, but trust us, you don't want to learn your lesson the hard way.
- Hang diaper bags, grocery bags, purses, backpacks, and other items off the back of your stroller carefully; strollers can tip, especially with little ones in them.
- Strollers are for sitting or lying down. Don't let your child stand in the stroller for any reason.
- Make sure your stroller is fully open before putting baby in. Partially collapsed strollers can not only scare your baby, but also pinch a hand or leg. Whether you're opening or closing the stroller, do it completely and without baby in or around the activity.
- Be careful on hills. Just like bicycles, strollers can gain speed. Busy parents with busy hands should use extra caution going down hills, particularly as hills descend into intersections. This might be a good time to put on that safety strap!
- Just like regular oil checks for your car, periodic maintenance for strollers is a good idea.

Amy the Ant's suggestions for: Bottles and Nipples



Unless you're available for breast-feeding 24/7, you're going to need bottles. Whether they're full of breast milk or formula is up to you—and what kind you end up using is pretty much up to your baby.

There are a myriad of combinations of bottles and nipples, including different shapes and materials for both. Will your baby like a bent-neck plastic bottle with a realistic silicone nipple? Or will he prefer a straight-neck disposable bottle with a traditional latex nipple?

All babies are different, and they'll actually have clear preferences, easily taking to some bottles and not to others. It will soon become clear that your baby is the ultimate decision maker, so don't over-invest in any one approach until you've figured out what works.

Features to look for

- **Neck styles.** Bottles have two different neck styles to choose from: straight or bent. Some parents feel straight necks are easier for switching between breast- and bottle-feeding; others argue that bent-neck bottles minimize air intake during nursing.
- **Nipple materials.** Silicone nipples (the clear ones) are firmer and hold their shape longer, while latex (the amber colored ones) are softer but may not hold up as well over time. Babies often prefer one over the other, making your choice simple.
- **Nipple shapes.** There are three nipple shapes to consider: traditional, orthodontic, or realistic. Traditional nipples have the regular protruding shape that you normally see. Orthodontic nipples are flat on the side that rests against the tongue. Realistic nipples—some of which are also considered orthodontic—are flatter and designed to mimic a mother's nipple, making it easier to switch between breast- and bottle-feeding.
- **Nipple size.** One size does not fit all. Start small for newborns and go bigger for toddlers. Experiment till you find the right fit.
- **Nipple flow rate.** Nipples come with different flow rates, based on your baby's age. Check the packaging to be sure you've got the right one.

Usage Tips

Milk should drip, not pour. If the milk comes out in a steady stream, it's time to replace the nipple. Never microwave milk or formula. After heating the milk, do the old inner wrist trick to make sure it's the right temperature—typically room temperature, never hot. Newborns need their bottles sterilized, but at some point you can just start washing bottles in the dishwasher. Some people only sterilize for a month, while others sterilize for two years.

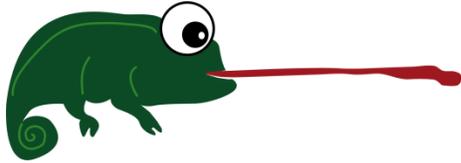
Accessories

Bottle-cleaning brush. This is an essential item for keeping your bottles clean and ready for use.

Insulated bottle carriers. Keep your bottles at the optimal temperature anytime you're out and about with a portable bottle carrier. These can carry anywhere from a single to a four-pack of bottles.

Bottle warmers. A nifty kitchen accessory that helps ensure you're serving your milk at the perfect temperature for your baby.

Bottle sterilizers. Since newborn baby bottles should always be sterilized, a bottle sterilizer is a handy tool, and an easy alternative to boiling water on the stove.



Chamy's suggestions for: Breast pumps

Choosing a breast pump is really pretty simple once you know what you need.

You may not even need a breast pump—especially if you're planning on going the formula route. If you'll be breast-feeding, it all depends on how much you'll be away from home. Working moms? Definitely. Stay-at-home moms? Not so much.

Pumps can be expensive, but there are choices for every budget. You do, however, get what you pay for, so consider how you'll be using it before deciding.

Your Basic Choice

Breast pumps all work in basically the same way: they use suction to draw milk from the breast into a container. What varies is how powerful the suction is and whether it's provided manually or with a motor. There are three basic types of breast pumps to consider.

Full-sized motorized pump

These are the most powerful pumps, and they get the job done quickly and efficiently. They're more expensive than other pumps but probably worth the investment if pumping will be part of your daily routine.

Portable motorized pump

These pumps are smaller and lighter than a full-size pump and made to go where you go. Some are battery operated, some are electric, and some offer the convenience of both.

Hand pump

These manually controlled pumps are lightweight, small, and inexpensive—and really all you'll need if you just want an occasional backup bottle or to express milk to relieve pressure.

General guidance

When it comes to choosing your breast pump, the first question to ask yourself is how often you'll need it. Are you just looking for an occasional night out, or are you a working mom who has to store milk every day? The more you'll rely on your pump to keep up the milk supply, the more you'll want to spend. Also, if you're planning on having more than one child and will be using it over the course of several years.

The better the pump, the easier pumping will be and the better you'll feel about it. And while some women are able to get a good flow going with any pump, most find that higher quality pumps help them produce milk more easily. However, if you're just looking for a way to store up a little milk for an occasional outing, then an inexpensive hand pump should be just fine, as long as it fits comfortably and works reasonably well.

Features to look for

AC adaptor. Battery-operated pumps are convenient, but an AC adaptor is a good extra in case you run out of power.

Adjustable suction and speed control. This feature allows you to ease into pumping in the early days, then maximize efficiency as your breasts get used to it.

Easy to clean. You could be pumping six or more times a day if you're working away from home, so look for easy-to-clean options when considering your pick.

Size/weight. Make sure your pump is portable enough, small enough, and light enough to work for you.

Usage tips

Pumping will probably feel weird at first, but it does get better. Start on lower speeds with less suction and build up to higher speeds after you get used to it.

Pumping might be uncomfortable, but it shouldn't actually hurt. If you find pumping painful, try adjusting the suction; if that doesn't work, consult your doctor.

Like breast-feeding, most people now realize that pumping is a fact of life. Where and when you pump is a matter of personal preference (and modesty), but you certainly don't have to hide in a bathroom stall to do it.

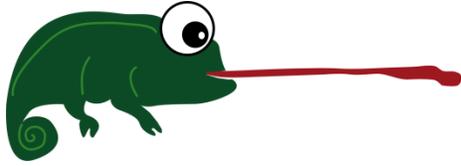
A nursing poncho lets you go about your business without having to hold a blanket over yourself with one hand.

Accessories

Breast products. There are breast creams that heal chafing, bra pads to prevent leaking, and plastic shells that form a protective layer when your breasts are too tender even for your bra.

Milk storage. Whether it's extra bottles or disposable bags, you'll want extras for stocking up.

Freezer storage. When you need to stock up on extra breast milk, try freezable containers that are compatible with your pump, or a breast-milk storage tray that looks like an ice tray with a lid.



Chamy's suggestions for: High Chairs

As soon as you start introducing solids, your baby will need a place to sit during meals. This is another product that we recommend buying new. As lovely as your grandmother's old high chair might be, antique and vintage chairs weren't made with today's safety standards in mind. In fact, they can actually be dangerous.

For example, most older models don't come with a five-point harness. Many of them have wider seats, as well, making it easier for a child to slip through. If you're going to go the secondhand route, just make sure it's a fairly recent model chair that will keep your child safe and secure.

Your basic choice

Whether it's a standard high chair, a European-style chair, a portable seat, or a booster, there is a wide range of styles available.

- **Standard highchair**

This is your standard, everyday chair with a tray. These can be used as soon as the child is sitting (at about six months), and some reclining models can be used even earlier.

- **European-style highchair**

These chairs don't have trays, allowing you to bring the baby right up to the table with you, starting at about nine months. As a general rule, this style can be used beyond the high-chair stage as a toddler seat.

- **Portable highchair**

Whether you are traveling, need a backup seat for Grandma's house, or just don't have enough room for a standard high chair, this compact seat that clips onto your table or chairs is an easy solution.

- **Booster seats**

Sometime after about 18 months, your child will make the transition to a booster seat. This is the modern version of using a telephone book to help your child reach the table, but it comes equipped with a seat belt to keep squirming youngsters in place.

- **Chair harness**

Not technically a chair, this fabric seat-cover ties to the back of a chair and has safety straps to anchor your child in place. This style is extremely easy to travel with, but doesn't provide the boost that a true booster seat does.

General guidance

If you buy a standard high chair, keep in mind that its useful life won't be all that long, although you'll enjoy its special features during the early stages. At some point, your toddler will need to move to a booster seat or a European-style toddler chair, and this can happen as early as 18 months for some children. No matter what type of chair you buy, here are some factors to consider.

- **Size.** How much room do you have, and how much room does your chair of choice require? Make sure these two measurements add up.
- **Stability.** As a general rule, the wider the base of the high chair, the more stable it will be. Make sure yours will stay standing through hectic mealtimes.
- **Washability.** There's no way around it: high chairs get dirty. No matter what kind you choose, make sure it's easy to clean, and definitely avoid fabrics that will stain or require a lot of maintenance.

If you're buying a portable high chair, you have two different styles to choose from: one that clips onto your table, or one that clips onto your chairs.

- **Portable that secures to table.** These have become so popular, some families buy them instead of a regular high chair. You just have to make sure it fits onto your table and won't damage it. Although these are as secure as standard high chairs, be sure to adhere to weight limits to ensure the chair's stability as your child grows. Best for travel are the fabric seats on a collapsible frame that fold and pack flat.
- **Portable that secures to chair.** These use the legs of a chair for elevation, and can be as complex as a mini-high chair, with all the same features, including a tray. Because these seats don't pack flat, fewer people choose them as a portable option. However, because this style is smaller than a full-size, it can be great as a second chair to be kept at Grandma's for part-time use.

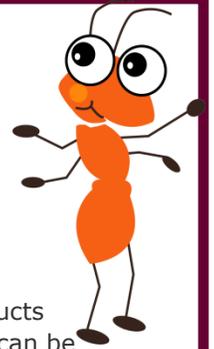
Features to look for

- **Five-point harness.** This is a must for keeping your baby securely in place during the high-chair stage. In the booster seat stage, the harness is optional, but recommended.
- **Seat-adjustability.** Babies come in all different shapes and sizes, and those shapes and sizes will change rapidly, so pick a high chair that will grow with and adjust to your baby at every stage.
- **Adjustable footrest.** The footrest should be movable to accommodate your growing baby.
- **Height-adjustability.** This setting lets you move the seat to whatever height allows you to comfortably reach your baby, whether you're sitting or standing.
- **Collapsibility.** If you don't have a lot of room to leave a high chair sitting out, find one that folds up for easy between-meal storage.
- **Recline settings.** If the chair reclines, you can start your child in it earlier, rather than waiting till he can sit up. It will also come in handy for the child who enjoys a quick snooze immediately after eating.

Usage tips

- If you prefer using a dishwasher to hand-washing, pick a high chair with a spare feeding tray.
- Use the five-point harness for safety—and resist the temptation to stop buckling up your child when she starts getting bigger and looking more stable.
- A slightly reclined seat can be great for bottle-feeding and is a necessity until the baby can sit upright without any help.
- Keep sharp, hot, and dangerous items out of reach of the high chair, especially in the kitchen. Even while seated, kids can be amazingly fast and agile!
- High chairs are for sitting, not standing. Of course, if your child's five-point harness is always secured, this should be easy to enforce.
- Double-check that the chair is locked into place when you use it, especially collapsible chairs.
- Never leave your baby unattended in any type of high chair or booster.

Amy the Ant's suggestions for: Skincare



Once the early days of warm water and a washcloth have passed, you'll want to seek out products that have been specially formulated for children, since adult formulas contain ingredients that can be hard on your little one's sensitive skin. When you can, choose natural or organic products, and keep things as simple as possible.

Beyond basic care, some babies have skin issues that need special attention. Most of the more common skin ailments, like cradle cap and eczema, can be addressed with simple, nonprescription products.

Remember, even though bathing your baby is a necessity, it's also a great opportunity for you to have fun together. So get ready to embrace bubbles, squirters, and cute little hooded towels—this might just turn out to be one of your favorite parts of parenting!

Your basic choices

These products will keep your child looking fresh and smelling sweet, while keeping skin soft and healthy.

- **Foam wash** This is a gentle formula, just for newborns, that is usually soap-free and that can be used to gently cleanse both hair and body.
- **Two-in-one wash** Like foam wash, this product does double duty as both shampoo and body wash, but it comes in formulas for both newborns and older babies.
- **Soap and body wash** Whether you use bar soap or body wash is your choice, but you'll want something a little more effective as your child becomes more active.
- **Shampoo** These are just like the products you use, only gentler.
- **Bubble bath and bath milk** Every kid loves bubble bath, and while you shouldn't use it every day, you'll definitely want to keep some on hand. Bath milk is a gentle, suds-free option that's made for sensitive or dry skin.
- **Moisturizers** If your baby has dry skin, there are lots of options available. On the lightest end of the spectrum is a moisturizing spray that's easy to rub in. In the middle are lotions and easily spreadable milk formulas. If you need a heavier moisturizer, try a cream or oil.
- **Diaper cream** There are basically two types of diaper cream: those that protect against diaper rash (often known as barrier creams) and those intended to treat a rash. Either way, these creams come in a range of consistencies, from sheer balms to thicker creams to pastes. These may or may not include a zinc oxide barrier to protect your child against moisture for longer durations.
- **Sunscreens** Children under the age of one need extra sun protection because of their thin and sensitive skin. Kid-formula sunscreens come in both lotions and light sprays, and a sunscreen stick is a quick and easy way to protect your baby's face.

General guidance

Sensitive care is especially important for babies, but it's a good habit to continue even for toddlers. Here are some terms to look for and what they mean.

- **Gentle:** fewer chemicals and less alcohol
- **Hypo-allergenic:** formulated against allergic reactions
- **All-natural:** contains no synthetic ingredients
- **Organic:** made from certified organic ingredients

Parents should be cautious of fragranced products. While many are hypoallergenic, perfumes affect babies differently and are just an additional strain on their very sensitive skin, so fragrance-free is a safe default.

Features to look for

- **Tearless.** Try as you might to avoid it, soap and shampoo will eventually get in your baby's eyes, so look for tearless formulas that won't sting.
- **Special formulas.** If your child has eczema or extra-sensitive skin, look for formulas that are made to help—some are now available without a prescription.

Additional information

Sunscreen tips for baby

Do babies wear sunscreen? You bet! Studies have shown that not only is skin cancer the most common cancer in Namibia, but also that sun damage occurring early in childhood increases the potential risk of skin cancer later in life. And children under the age of one need extra sun protection because of their thin and sensitive skin, even if you're only going for a short stroll.

In addition to staying out of the midday sun and dressing your baby in protective clothing, the best way to protect your child is with a pure physical sunscreen. As opposed to chemical sunscreens, which absorb UV radiation on the skin and then disperse the energy into harmless rays, physical sunscreens sit on top of the skin, reflecting, scattering, and blocking UVA and UVB radiation.

Only physical sunscreens (or combination sunscreens, which offer both physical and chemical blocks) have broad-spectrum UVA and UVB coverage, which means they give you the best protection available. Physical sunscreens are also less irritating, since they don't get absorbed into the top layer of skin.

Chemical and physical sunscreens contain different ingredients, and the best way to tell you're getting a physical sunscreen is to look for zinc oxide or titanium dioxide on the label. If you do use a chemical sunscreen, apply it half an hour before going outside so it has a chance to absorb, and make sure it's PABA-free.

Whichever you choose, shoot for an SPF of at least 30. Anything less doesn't offer enough protection, and anything more doesn't really make that big of a difference, as long as you're applying it as directed. Be generous with the sunscreen, and don't overlook smaller areas like ears, nose, and back of neck. If you're using a spray-on sunscreen, spray up close to make sure it doesn't dissipate before making it to the skin.

Amy the Ant's suggestions for: Bath time



Babies don't need a lot of washing—really only every few days. You won't give your baby a true bath until after the umbilical cord falls off. The best place to bathe your newborn is in the kitchen sink, because it's easier on your back and lets you feel more in control. Needless to say, at some point your child will start to outgrow the sink, and then it's time to transition to the tub.

The first few baths can be scary, but a bath seat or an infant tub that fits inside the sink or bathtub will help ensure your slippery little baby is secure. Though you'll only use your infant tub or seat for a few months, it's well worth the money in terms of peace of mind.

Your Basic Choice

Sink tub

For newborns and infants, you can use a reclining tub that fits inside your kitchen sink and allows you to stand while bathing your child. Though not absolutely essential, this tub is relatively inexpensive and saves you a lot of fumbling and worry.

Bathtub insert

Designed to sit inside of a regular tub, these smaller tubs are quicker to fill than the whole tub and also more secure, since there's less room for your child to slip around in. There are reclining options for younger children and adjustable options that take you from reclining to seated for longer-term use.

Bath seats

A bath seat isn't a tub, but rather a seat that sits inside a filled sink or tub to hold your child upright in the water. There are styles for infants, styles for older babies, and styles that cover both. In general, bath seats are more compact than tub inserts, and many even collapse for easy storage when not in use.

General Guidance

First and foremost, you'll want a tub you feel safe using. Make sure the tub or seat is stable, and look for nonslip surfaces, both inside and on the bottom of the tub. **NB: No matter how safe your tub is, never leave your child unattended while bathing.**

Make sure the tub or seat holds your baby in the proper position: with head above water but body covered so she doesn't get cold.

Also, look for a low-maintenance tub that's easy to wipe down so you can keep it clean from mildew. The more cracks and crevices the tub has, the longer the cleanup process and the easier it is to miss a spot.

While there's something to be said for investing in one tub that grows with your baby, it's going to take up more room. If you're space-constrained or will be sharing a bathroom with your child, you might prefer to make a couple of purchases that cover different stages but are more compact.

features to look for

Drainage. Lifting a tubful of water to dump it out can be difficult—especially with a toddler tub. Save yourself the effort by getting one with a drain.

Water-temperature gauge. Keep an eye on water temperature with a thermometer that's either built in or added as an accessory (although you should always check the temperature yourself to make sure it's not too hot).

Water-line delineator. A simple water-fill line inside the tub helps make sure you keep your baby covered without overfilling.

Mildew-resistant. Keep your tub from becoming a health hazard with a mildew-resistant fabrication.

Usage tips

When bathing, start with your baby's body, work your way to the face, then end with the hair (because a wet head can be chilly!).

Nothing takes the fun out of bath-time like the shivers, so keep the area where you're bathing and changing your baby warm and cozy.

Accessories

Faucet covers. Kids seem destined to have head-on collisions with the faucet, but a rubber faucet cover can make the difference between a minor boo-boo and an occasion for stitches.

Floating thermometers. Make sure the baby's bath is juuuuust right. These come in all sorts of fun styles, too, like floating flowers or ducks.

Hand-held sprayer. If bubble bath becomes a bath-time favorite, a sprayer that hooks onto your faucet can simplify rinsing at the end.

Rinsing cups. These are handy for tears-free hair rinsing—especially if you don't have a handheld sprayer.

Washcloths and sponges. Look for small and simple natural sponges or soft organic cloths. We recommend soft, natural sponges because they make it easy to wash tiny body parts.

Hooded towels. A must for babies, these cover both the head and body for easy and quick dry-offs.

Bath toys. From rubber duckies to bath squirters, bath toys are a staple of bath-time. At the beginning, your baby will have more fun with you, but as they become more aware of their surroundings, they'll really start enjoying their toys, too.

Toy holders. Whether it's a handy scoop for easy cleanup or a mesh bag that hangs in the shower, these will keep your bathroom tidy and keep you from stepping on plastic sea creatures every time you get in the shower. Just make sure the holder drains so toys have a chance to dry.

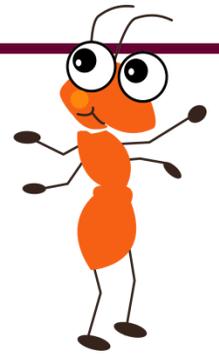
BIZZY'S suggestions for: "Baby Safe Home"



How to create a "baby safe" home

- Cover all power outlets with outlet plugs
- Close windows in upper floors
- Lock away all chemicals, medicines, scissors and razors away safely
- Secure all stair cases
- Television, music system and PC should be stored away safely
- Attach all shelves to walls
- Always lock away all matches and lighters
- Do not leave hot or alcoholic beverages standing around
- Do not leave small items lying around that a baby can choke on
- Fit glass doors with safety glass and put stickers on glass doors at eye level of baby or toddler
- Ensure that all window blind cords are looped out of reach
- Store cleaning products separately from foods and out of reach of babies or toddlers
- Ensure that all doors are fitted with door stops to prevent them from slamming on fingers

Always keep a list of emergency numbers somewhere accessible!



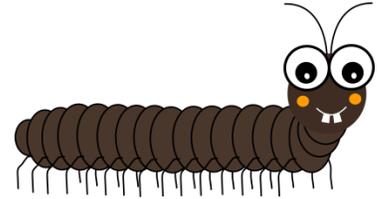
Amy the Ant's suggestions for: A healthy baby, healthy world

From food to textiles, organic and eco-friendly products have become a hot issue—particularly when it comes to children's products. Pound for pound, everything that is harmful to us has an even bigger impact on a tiny person with a developing immune system.

But how do you know what to buy? What's worth the extra expense, and which items are just hopping on the bandwagon? Organic standards are always changing, and you're not alone if the whole thing leaves you feeling confused. But in the meantime, here are some things you can do to create a pure, nontoxic environment for your child that will let everyone breathe a little easier.

- Sleep better with healthier bedding. Baby blankets and sheets can contain formaldehyde and other harmful chemicals. Look for organic bedding and Oeko-Tex or IVN certified fabrics that are both comfortable and healthy.
- Make sure clean is also healthy. Babies can be very sensitive to the ammonia, chemicals, and fragrances found in commercial cleaners. There are many nontoxic (and often biodegradable) cleaners to choose from that are both safe and effective.
- Keep personal care pure. Less is more, and sometimes a little warm water and a washcloth will do the trick. For the other times, look for mild soaps, fragrance-free shampoos, hypoallergenic solutions, and ointments with simple ingredients.
- Pick the right paint for your nursery. Look for paint with low or no VOCs (volatile organic compounds), and be sure to have the room painted several weeks in advance of baby's arrival so fumes have a chance to dissipate. Also, choose furniture with water-based finishes or low-VOC paints, and avoid materials that off-gas (that is, release toxic fumes).
- Stock up on simple toys. Choose simple toys that are PVC-free (meaning no polyvinyl chloride), made of naturally finished wood, or made of washable fabrics.
- Let in some fresh air. Make sure your baby's room is well-ventilated, and open the windows to let in fresh air when the weather allows. Be sure to use an air purifier to help minimize dust and other irritants.

Shonga's suggestions for: Baby Monitors



Short of standing over your child's crib while she sleeps, nothing can give you more peace of mind than a good baby monitor. The moment your baby cries, whimpers, or even stirs, you'll be able to hear her and come to her aid. And it's not only about peace of mind—it's about nabbing a little bit of time for yourself. A monitor allows you to go about your day while still keeping one eye (or at least an ear) on your child.

Your basic choice

While features and options vary widely by model, there are two basic types of baby monitors:

Audio monitors

These allow you to listen for stirring or crying, so you'll know the moment your baby wakes up. Most include a visual sound display, which will alert you even if you've turned the volume down too low to hear.

Video monitors

With a video monitor, you never have to wonder whether your child is sleeping. A small video display lets you keep an eye on your child just as if you were standing right there. These monitors also offer night vision.

Features to look for

- **Intercom.** The sound of your voice can be reassuring for a crying infant, and, as your child grows into a toddler, the intercom will allow you to communicate from different rooms.
- **Rechargeable battery or AC adapter.** Don't run out of power! Look for monitors with rechargeable batteries and/or AC adapters.
- **Out-of-battery signal.** These indicate if your monitor is running out of juice so you can plug it in.
- **Thermostat.** You should always pay attention to the temperature in your baby's nursery, and a monitor that includes a temperature reading can save an extra purchase.
- **Motion sensor.** Placed under the crib mattress, these sensors signal an alarm if the baby doesn't stir for a longer-than-normal period.
- **Electronic smog.** The purpose of a baby monitor is actually to protect your precious little ones, but you will be surprised how many produce far too much electro smog and are actually harming them. The radiation is worse the closer the monitor is to the baby, so we recommend always placing the monitor 1m away from the bed. If electro smog concerns you rather make use of a monitor working with analog technology than with DECT technology.
- **Out-of-range signal.** If you've wandered too far from your handset to pick up the signal, an audio alert will let you know right away. This on the one hand is a very practical feature on the other side also the biggest contributor to electro smog, so if you are conscious about electro smog, choose a monitor without out-of-range signal or one where the out-of-range signal can be switched off.

Usage Tips

- Monitors don't replace supervision; common sense regarding parental care still applies.
- This is an electrical gadget; keep it clear of water and follow the manufacturer's guidelines.