

INFANCY - PRENATAL

Promotion of healthy habits

Obtain an infant car seat in which to transport your newborn home.

Ensure that your crib is safe. The slats should be no more than 2 3/8" apart, and the mattress should be firm and fit snugly into the crib. Do not put the baby to sleep on a soft surface such as a waterbed, couch, or pillow.

Do not use baby walkers at any age. Tell family members not to give one as a gift.

Install smoke detectors if not already in place and make sure they work properly.

Set hot water heater thermostat at less than 120°F.

Make the home and car nonsmoking zones, with all smoking done outside. Protect your baby's health by attending a smoking cessation program. Stop using drugs or alcohol.

Learn infant cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

Ask the health professional any questions you have about breastfeeding.

If you are bottle-feeding: To avoid developing a habit that will harm your infant's teeth, do not put her to bed with a bottle or prop it in her mouth. Hold the baby in a semi-sitting position to feed her.

Obtain a dental checkup and treatment before the birth of the baby.

Keep your prenatal appointments.

Attend childbirth classes.

Promotion of constructive family relationships and parental health

With the new baby, expect changes in your family relationships. Having a new baby in the family is often stressful. Plan on helping each other take care of the infant.

Let go of less important tasks and functions for the first month or two.

Prepare older siblings for the new baby.

Anticipate that there may be times when you feel tired, overwhelmed, inadequate, or depressed. Many women feel the baby blues for a short period.

Develop a support system, whether with friends or family members or through community programs.