

Infants & Toddlers HEALTH & SAFETY

Why This Is Important

Many parents are accustomed to being able to contact their child's doctor at any time. However, during a pandemic, healthcare services may be overwhelmed. Parents may not wish to bring their children to a treatment center for minor illnesses or injuries, as doing so may expose their child to pandemic flu. While healthcare services may be available for the critically ill or injured during a pandemic, parents may find themselves caring for minor illnesses and injuries at home.

Be Prepared

1. Household first aid kit. Be sure it includes items specifically for infants:

- infant thermometers (at least one that does not require batteries)
- diaper rash cream
- baby Tylenol
- infant Motrin
- infant Benadryl
- hydrocortisone cream
- baby 'Oral Gel'
- petroleum jelly
- bulb syringe

Infant
Thermometer



2. Good reference books may help you diagnose and treat illness and injuries when other sources of advice are unavailable (for example, if the internet is down, phone service is unavailable, or doctors are absent).

Caring for Your Baby and Young Child Revised Edition: Birth to Age 5, by American Academy of Pediatrics or a similar reference is a good resource to have on hand; such books focus specifically on the needs of young children, but do assume access to regular health care services.

Where There is No Doctor, though meant for all ages, does not assume access to health care as it is for use in developing countries. Available to be downloaded for free here: http://www.hesperian.org/publications_download_wtnd.php

(Note: For treatment of influenza – see *'Influenza Pandemic Preparation and Response – A Citizen's Guide* available at the downloads section on the homepage of this site).

Prevent Illness, Infection and Injuries

1. Illness: By taking social distancing steps in a pandemic, and keeping infants and children at home, you will reduce their exposure to many communicable diseases.

2. Infection: Simple precautions can help greatly. Pay attention to cleanliness. Immediately attend to any blisters, diaper sores or cuts in the skin to prevent infection. Clip nails to prevent scratches which can become infected. Signs of infection include swelling, redness or discharge from the wound; consult available health care or your reference books for how to deal with these.

3. Injuries/Poisoning:



WARNING: It only takes a moment for a child to become seriously injured or killed. There will most likely not be medical care available. Do not rely on barriers – these are easily climbed. Children are invariably stronger and more agile than parents think. Watch your children at ALL times. DO NOT rely on older siblings to watch your child. **There is NO substitute for parental supervision of a child around dangerous items or situations.**



- Be vigilant in making your home safe for an infant or young child. You may need to use a crib or more often than in normal times.
- Items like buckets of water or propane stoves, candles and such that you may be using in a power outage can cause injury or death if you are not extremely careful when children are around them.
- Move choking hazards and poisons OUT of reach. Learn now to perform the Heimlich maneuver on an infant or small child.
- Baby proof your home now more than ever, and stay alert to hazards when you are out of your usual routine. In a stressful emergency situation, be especially attentive to making your home safe from accidents, especially falls, suffocation or choking, poisoning, scalds and burns.
- **Take Care!** Review and be sure to follow the safety precautions listed in any baby book.