

It starts during your pregnancy. Avoid smoking or exposing yourself and your unborn baby to second hand smoke. It is important to see your OB regularly for prenatal check-ups to help reduce the risk of a low birth weight or premature birth. Breast feeding after birth and if possible through the first year of life provides nutrients to your infant not found in commercial formulas.

SLEEPING ENVIRONMENT

The best place for your newborn to sleep is in their bassinet or crib in your room within arms reach. This aids maternal bonding and eases breast feeding.

It is best to place the newborn on their back for night time sleeping and naps. Avoid covering their head or over bundling in cloths or blankets. Your baby needs to be warm but not overheated.

Over heating is characterized by damp hair, sweating, flushed cheeks (red cheeks), heat rash and rapid breathing. A good guide is to dress baby lighter and set the room temperature to a level comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.

Ensure your child's bassinet or crib is safety approved by the Juvenile Products Manufacturing Association (JPMA) with a firm mattress and a well fitted sheet. The bassinet or crib should be away from heat sources in the home and areas where tobacco products may be used.

Toys, soft bedding, fluffy blankets, comforters, pillows and stuffed animals should not be placed in the bassinet or crib. In addition, comforters and blankets should not be draped over the sides of a bassinet or crib as this reduces air flow through the sleeping area. If bumper pads are used they should be thin, short in height, firm and well secured to the sides of the crib.

TUMMY TIME

Supervised Tummy Time is performed any time your baby is awake. Your child should be placed in a safe environment away from objects which could fall on them, electrical appliances, animals, heating vents and small toys which could be placed in the mouth.

Tummy Time is a very important part of your child's development. Though your child may struggle to lift their head and push themselves up, this activity is important for muscle development, coordination, spinal curvature development and general exercise. Performing Tummy Time activities several times during the day will help mature your child and aid them in reaching developmental milestones.

Here are some handy web sites:

American Academy of Pediatrics: www.AAPPOLICY.ORG
Juvenile Products Manufactures Association: www.JPMA.ORG/