

Infant Security



How Parents
Can Help

The
BIRTHPLACE
A Family Experience

At Hendrick Medical Center

*Congratulations on the birth of your new baby!
We would like to thank you for choosing The
BirthPlace at Hendrick for your joyful event. We
offer our best wishes to you and your family.*

You have planned and anticipated this special time for a long time and the hospital staff



wants to give you and your baby the best care while you're here. One thing that's very important is telling you what to do to keep your baby safe and secure – while you are here with us and after you go home.

Even though it is very rare, you need to know about the unfortunate risk of babies being abducted from hospitals or after a mother and baby go home. It is our responsibility to share important information on how to protect your baby both now and when you leave the hospital for home.

Please take time to read this booklet. It helps you know what we do and what you can do, to keep your baby safe. Remember that as the mother you are a very important part of your baby's security.

We wish you all the best.

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Understanding Infant Security

It's unfortunate, but there are people who want a baby so badly that they will do anything to get one. This doesn't happen often, but it does happen.

Who would abduct a baby – and why?

Most times, it is a woman of childbearing age.

She may have had one baby and finds she can't have another.

Or maybe she's trying to replace a child she had taken away from her.

Many of these women have had miscarriages or are trying desperately to save a bad relationship.



Most of the babies abducted are taken by someone pretending to be someone else – a healthcare worker, or a new friend. Many times, the mother knows the abductor, even though the person never acted suspicious. In the majority of cases, the baby is found in less than a week within 25 miles of where it was abducted.

Where would someone abduct a baby?

Babies have been abducted from hospitals, at home or in public.

In a hospital, an abductor might try to enter the mother's room pretending to work at the hospital. This person might say she is taking the baby to have it weighed or tested, or use some other false story. Other times, the abductor might take a baby left alone in the mother's room.

After mother and baby leave the hospital, an abductor might come to the house pretending to be a healthcare worker, a delivery person or some other kind of worker who asks to be let inside the house. Because hospitals have increased security, abductors now look

for easier places away from the hospital to abduct a baby. The number of babies taken from homes has increased in the last few years. Sometimes babies are taken in public places like stores, parking lots, parks or doctors' offices.

How do hospitals keep babies safe?

Hospitals do many things to keep mothers and newborn babies safe during their stay. Keeping doors locked and alarmed, using security cameras and putting security bands on babies are some examples. Hospital employees also have strict safety rules they must follow when handling and moving your baby. Your nurse can explain how Hendrick handles infant security.

Keeping Your Baby Safe in the Hospital

Hendrick does everything possible to keep your baby safe. As the baby's mother, you are a very important part of your baby's safety, too. During your hospital stay, here are things you should do.

Know Your Nurses

At the beginning of each shift, the nurse who will be taking care of you and your baby should come to your room to introduce him/herself to you. It's a good idea to become familiar with the maternity unit staff.

Learn the Hospital's Routine

Ask your nurse about Hendrick's nursery and feeding schedules as well as their visiting hour policies. Nursing staff will be glad to answer any security questions you may have.

Never Leave Your Baby Unattended

While in your room, DO NOT allow your baby to be out of your sight, even for a brief moment. An abductor will look for any opportunity to snatch a baby that has been left unattended. Whether

you're taking a nap or just going to the bathroom, ask a family member to watch the baby for you, or ask your nurse to take your baby back to the nursery.

Keep the bassinet beside your bed, on the side away from the door. At night it is also a good idea to keep at least one light on so the nursing staff can help you keep an eye on your baby.

Check for an Official Hospital ID Badge

Be cautious of any person you do not know entering your room. In hospitals around the country, babies have been abducted directly from the mother's room. Sometimes, mothers have actually handed their babies to abductors who were pretending to be hospital employees.

Before you let anyone touch your baby, check that person's photo identification (ID) badge. It must be facing forward so you can see the employee's name, picture and the hospital's official logo.

If you're not sure about someone who has come into your room, press your "Nurse Call" button for immediate help.

Know About Tests and Procedures

The hospital staff will let you know ahead of time about any scheduled test or procedure for your baby. You will be told where that test will be and how long your baby will be gone. In most cases, you can go with your baby to watch. Call the nurse's station if any unfamiliar staff member asks you questions about your baby or wants to take your baby for an unscheduled test.

Make Sure Your Baby Travels in the Bassinet

Any time your baby leaves your hospital room, it must be in the bassinet. Only authorized staff members are allowed to move or care for your child during your hospital stay. Notify the nurse's station immediately if you see anyone carrying a baby in his or her arms.



Limit Visitors

You will only be in the hospital for a short time. This is when you learn how to take care of your baby, spend quiet time with your baby and get some rest. You also want to make sure the hospital staff can easily get into your room to care for you and your baby. Sometimes these things are hard to do if you have too many visitors.

Plan ahead and decide which family and friends will see your baby at the hospital. Other people important to you may wish to visit after you get home. Discuss your plans with your family and friends as soon as possible after your baby is born. Explain that you're doing what's best for you and your baby.

Don't Give Out Personal Information

Do not give out any information about you or your baby over the telephone or in person unless you absolutely know the person who is asking you questions.

Keeping Your Baby Safe After Leaving the Hospital

As you get ready to leave the hospital, stay aware of your baby's security. Security provided by the hospital ends when you are discharged. Even after you go home, there is still the possibility your baby could be taken –

not just from your home, but anywhere you and your baby may go. Take these steps to keep your baby safe.

Take Home a Photo of Baby

For your records, take home at least one color picture of your baby (full front view), and put together a complete written description (identifying features or marks) of your baby. Include in your description the baby's weight and length, plus hair and eye color. Your baby's appearance will change rapidly. Continue to take photos at least once a month.

Home Visits

Hendrick does not routinely conduct follow-up home visits. In the instance that a home visit is needed, arrangements will be made before you leave the hospital.

Don't "Advertise" Your Baby

Even though a lot of people do it, think twice about putting up decorations outside your home that announce your baby's arrival. Balloons, ribbons, banners, wooden storks and other ornaments on your mailbox or lawn might cause an abductor to target your home.

Birth announcements in the newspaper also are a risk. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has cases on file where a baby was targeted because of a birth announcement in a local newspaper.

Don't Leave Your Baby Alone

When you are away from home, never leave your baby alone. Babies have been abducted from shopping malls, clinics, parking lots, vehicles and other locations.

Don't Let Strangers Care for Your Baby

Never give your baby to a stranger to hold, and never ask a stranger to watch your baby, even for a moment. Do not allow a stranger to baby-sit your newborn, or anyone who has made friends with you during your pregnancy or your hospital stay. It's best to have family and longtime friends to baby-sit your baby. Ask for references of anyone you plan to hire as a baby sitter.

Don't Give Out Personal Information

At home, just like in the hospital, do not give out any personal information about you or your baby over the telephone or in person unless you absolutely know the person who is asking you questions.

Share This Information

If family members and friends are helping you with the baby – in the hospital OR at home – be sure to share with them the information from this booklet. Remember, when it comes to protecting your baby, you are your baby's first line of defense.

Sources of information for this booklet:

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)
National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS)
Security Assessments International Archives





Hospital and Home Security Checklist for New Mothers

As you began to plan for the future of your baby we want to warn you about the remote threat of an infant abduction while you are in the hospital and after you and your baby return home.

Even though cases are extremely rare, we want you to have this security information to help you protect your baby during your hospital stay and after you leave the hospital. Parents are the first line of defense for their baby's safety and security. Please take a moment to read this educational material and keep it with you for your future reference. The following practices are recommended during your hospital stay and after discharge.

In the hospital:

- Make sure you are introduced to your primary nurse at the beginning of each shift.
- As soon as possible, have your nurse explain all security procedures, and the schedule for the nursery, feeding and visiting hours.
- Never allow your baby out of your sight. This includes when you go to the bathroom or take a nap. When your baby is in the room with you, keep the bassinet beside your bed away from the door.
- **DO NOT GIVE YOUR BABY** to anyone that is not wearing a hospital photo ID facing forward with the hospital logo and caregiver's name displayed.
- The hospital will notify you in advance of any scheduled test or procedures. Call the nurse's station should anyone you are unfamiliar with insist on taking your baby for an unscheduled test or procedure.
- Always see that your baby is transported by bassinet and notify the nurse's station if you see anyone carrying an infant in their arms.
- Plan for who will visit you in the hospital so you don't have too many visitors.
- Do not give out any information about you or your baby over the phone or in person unless you absolutely know the person with whom you are talking.

Before You Leave the Hospital:

- Have a color photograph of your baby taken as soon after birth as possible. Write down a complete description of any birth marks, baby's hair color, eye color, length, weight and date of birth.

After You Leave the Hospital:

- Do not allow anyone into your home without proper photo identification.
- Do not display outside decorations (balloons, ribbons, wooden storks, etc.).
- Do not place your baby's birth announcement in the newspaper.
- Never leave your baby unattended away from home.
- Do not give out any information to casual acquaintances or strangers, i.e., phone numbers, addresses, etc.

Share Safety Information

Be sure to provide this important safety information with family and friends who will help you care for your baby.

Home with Baby – Safety Checklist

Home security is a vital part of protecting your baby. Here are more steps that can be taken to defend against a possible abductor.

- Keep all exterior doors and windows locked at all times, especially in the baby's room.
- Install a peephole to identify persons at your door who want to enter.
- Never let anyone into your home who is a stranger or you don't know very well.
- Do not allow any healthcare providers into your home to examine your baby – or take your baby away from the home for medical treatment, unless you have scheduled these activities with your healthcare provider in advance.
- Only allow family or longtime friends whom you trust to baby-sit your newborn.
- Keep a list of Emergency Numbers beside your phone.
- When you transport your child by vehicle, make sure your baby is in an infant seat and the vehicle's doors are locked at all times.
- When you're away from home never leave your baby unattended, even for a short period of time. Babies have been taken from shopping center, malls, clinics, photo shops, automobiles, and other locations.





Emergency Phone Numbers

Police/Sheriff _____

Medical Emergency _____

Baby's Doctor _____

Father's Work _____

Mother's Work _____

Friend or Relative _____

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