



## Infant Furniture: Cribs

### CHOOSING A CRIB

As you look at a crib, make sure you check the following, especially if you choose a used crib that may have been built before current crib safety standards were set.

- When purchasing a crib, look for Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association (JPMA) certification. New cribs that are certified by the JPMA will not have drop sides, but may have a drop gate, where the top portion of one side folds down to permit easier access to the crib.
- The slats should be no more than 2- $\frac{3}{8}$  inches apart. Widely spaced slats can allow an infant's torso to fall through but will trap the infant's head, which can result in death.
- All joints and parts should fit tightly, and the wood must be smooth and free of splinters.
- Check for cracked and peeling paint. All surfaces should be covered with lead-free paint safe for nursery furniture.
- The end panels should be solid, without decorative cutouts. Cutout areas on panels can trap an infant's head.
- Corner posts should be flush with the end panels or else be very, very tall (such as posts on a canopy bed). Clothing and ribbons can catch on tall corner posts and strangle an infant.
- If the crib has a drop side or drop gate, the lowered crib sides should be at least 9 inches above the mattress support to prevent the infant from falling out. Raised crib sides should be at least 26 inches above the mattress support in its lowest position.
- The drop sides should have a locking, hand-operated latch that will not release unintentionally.
- All hardware, including screws, bolts, nuts, plastic parts, etc, should be present and original equipment. Never substitute original parts with something from a hardware store.
- Do not use the crib if there are any missing, damaged, or broken parts of the crib.
- The mattress should be the same size as the crib so there are no gaps to trap arms, body, or legs. If you can fit more than 2 fingers between the mattress and the side of the crib, the crib and mattress combination should not be used.

### USING A CRIB

- Check to see if your crib has been recalled at [www.cpsc.gov/info/cribs/index.html](http://www.cpsc.gov/info/cribs/index.html).
- Read and follow the directions to set up, use, and care for the crib.
- Never use a crib with loose or missing attachments or support hardware.
- Never leave the crib sides down when the baby is in the crib.
- Hanging crib toys (mobiles, crib gyms) should be out of the baby's reach. Any hanging crib toy must be removed when your baby first begins to push up on his or her hands and knees or when the baby is 5 months old, whichever occurs first. These toys can strangle a baby.
- If bumper pads are used, remove them when the baby begins to stand so that they can't be used as steps.
- The crib mattress should be lowered before the baby can sit alone. The mattress should be at its lowest point before the baby can stand.
- Children should be taken out of a crib by the time they are 35 inches tall.
- Never place a crib near cords from a hanging window blind or drapery. Children can get caught in the cords and strangle.
- Be sure to inspect every crib your child uses for safety—those at the grandparent's home, the baby-sitter's home, or the child care center.

- Hammocks and other swinging devices should not be installed onto a crib because the baby may be strangled.
- If parts are missing, contact the crib manufacturer for replacements. Do not attempt to replace them with hardware store parts.

### **SAFE BEDDING PRACTICES FOR INFANTS**

- Place your baby on his or her back on a firm tight-fitting mattress in a crib that meets current safety standards.
- Remove pillows, pillow-like bumper pads, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys, and other soft products from the crib.
- Consider using a sleeper or other sleep clothing as an alternative to blankets, with no other covering.
- If using a blanket, put your baby with feet at the foot of the crib. Tuck a thin blanket around the crib mattress, reaching only as far as your baby's chest.
- Make sure your baby's head remains uncovered during sleep.
- Do not place your baby on a water bed, sofa, soft mattress, pillow, or other soft surface.

### **PORTABLE CRIBS AND PLAYPENS**

- Never leave the side of a mesh playpen lowered because a baby can become trapped and suffocate.
- When your child is able to sit or get up on all fours (or when he reaches 5 months), remove any toys tied across the top of the playpen.
- When your child can pull himself to standing, remove any large toys that could be used as steps.
- Check the top rails for tears and holes because teething children often bite off chunks of the covering. If the tears are small, you can fix them with heavy-duty cloth tape. If the tears are large, you may need to replace the rails.
- Make sure that there are no tears, holes, or loose threads in the mesh and that openings are less than ¼ inch across. Make sure the mesh is securely attached to the top rail and the floor plate. If staples are used, make sure they are not missing, loose, or exposed.

From Your Doctor

The information in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on the individual facts and circumstances.

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