

ADDITIONAL NEEDS FOR THE NEONATE

If you were having a special guest come to stay at your home for a week or two, what would be one of your first concerns? You would probably wonder where the guest would sleep and what he/she would sleep on. Well, when a baby arrives, you will be having a special guest for many years, and you will have the same things to think about. Where will the baby sleep? In what will the baby sleep?

It is fun to keep the baby in your bedroom, in a small bassinet for the first couple of weeks, but as everyone adjusts to the situation, the baby should be moved into his/her room and a crib. There are all types of cribs. Many thrifty parents will borrow a crib from friends or family members who are not currently using their cribs. Others will spend hundreds of dollars for an ideal nursery crib. It really doesn't matter to the baby as long as the crib is safe. The slats on the crib should not be more than 2 1/2 inches apart. Many older cribs do not meet today's standards. **SAFETY IS THE FIRST RULE IN SELECTING A CRIB!** Make sure the crib will provide a comfortable, safe place for your baby to rest.

Inside the crib, you will need a mattress, crib sheet, light weight blankets, heavy blankets, mattress pad and a bumper pad. A caution should also be given on selecting bumper pads. There are many beautiful bumper pads. Just make sure that the pad fastens securely to the sides and that there is no way the baby could get his/her head caught or entangled anywhere between the bumper pad and the crib.

Babies have some additional special needs:

Blunt-tipped nail clippers are easier to use when trimming the baby's nails.

Cotton swabs are handy for cleaning all the little crevasses and skin folds a newborn baby has.

A rectal thermometer is useful for those inevitable times when the baby will be ill.

A soft brush and small comb are nice for grooming a very soft scalp.

Many parents encourage babies to suck a pacifier. This is a personal choice.

There are many, many styles of pacifiers available. This is another decision you will have to make, as a parent.

Current law states that children under five years of age must be placed in a certified child restraint when traveling. This may seem like a huge expense at first, but training your baby from birth to ride in a car seat could possibly save his/her life. (Besides, it's the law!) Many hospitals or health centers have car seats for parents to use or rent until they purchase one of their own.

A stroller may seem optional to you as all these newborn costs begin to add up, but as the baby grows, a quality stroller becomes a basic necessity. It is good for the baby to be outside and see new and interesting things.

A final baby necessity is a functional diaper bag. Just forget to take this important bag with you and you'll find out how important it is. It holds food, toys, a change of clothing, diapers, pacifiers, your wallet, and usually several other things. Dad's look great carrying diaper bags around. It shows they are proud of their baby and have an active roll in caring for the child.