



# KEEP YOUR CHILD HEALTHY AND SAFE

This information is based on research by Sarah Myers, RN, CCHC and used with permission. References noted on Page 2

## Restrictive Environments

Restrictive equipment such as infant walkers, Exersaucers<sup>®</sup>, swings and bouncy chairs have increased in popularity over the past 20 years. Many parents and caregivers use them because they believe they keep baby busy, safe and happy. While these items can be helpful for limited periods of time, they can also be misused and cause injuries if not used properly. As you read, you will learn about concerns and recommendations related to this equipment.



Boppy<sup>®</sup> Pillow



Exersaucer<sup>®</sup>



Bouncy Chair



©Bumbo Seat

<b>SOCIAL CONCERNS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less time spent interacting with baby. <i>Babies experience relationships through their senses. Touch is especially important: holding and stroking stimulates the brain to release hormones necessary for growth.</i></li> <li>• Fewer opportunities for babies to play with each other and develop friendships. <i>Infants as young as four months can initiate and form friendships.</i></li> </ul>
<b>PHYSICAL CONCERNS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is an increased risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) if an infant sleeps in any position or piece of equipment (such as a swing) other than flat on his/her back in a safety approved crib or playpen.</li> <li>• Bouncy chairs, car seats, swings, etc. are contributing to an increase in misshapen skulls and delayed motor skills such as crawling, rolling and walking.</li> <li>• Using restrictive equipment that requires infants to have head and neck control (ex. Exersaucer<sup>®</sup>) could be harmful to infants if used before they are physically ready.</li> </ul>
<b>SAFETY CONCERNS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), an estimated 2,600 children younger than 15 months were treated in hospital emergency departments in the United States in 2005 for injuries associated with the use of infant walkers.</li> <li>• Moving at more than 3 ft./sec. an infant in a walker can be across the room before an adult has time to react.</li> <li>• The injuries resulting from walkers were mainly due to falls and burns. Children in walkers can be injured if the walker falls down stairs, if it tips over, or if the child tries to crawl out of the walker. Children in walkers can burn themselves by pulling cups or pots containing hot liquids on themselves; or by coming into contact with hot ovens, radiators or heaters.</li> </ul>

Quotes: "The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a ban on the manufacture and sale of mobile infant walkers in the U.S." (AAP Policy Statement)  
 "Too many babies are kept practically all day in cribs, infant seats, slings, baby carriers, bouncy chairs, walkers, high chairs and swings." (Karen Miller, Simple Stops pg86)





**\*Decrease unsafe sleeping \* Minimize use of equipment \*Increase play and tummy time  
\*Prevent flat heads, tight neck muscles and developmental delays**

Item	Appropriate Use	Ages for Use	Limits
Walkers	American Academy of Pediatrics recommends walkers not to be used due to the potential for injury.	<b>Do Not Use</b>	<b>Do Not Use</b>
Swings	Use only firm, molded swings. Make sure frame and swing are stable and hardware is light. Always use safety strap. Make sure swing has crotch guard/straps. If baby falls asleep, move to safety approved crib or playpen. Pay particular attention to the baby's ability to control head if swing seat is in an upright position.	6 weeks to 6 months	No more than 15 minutes at a time 2 times / day
Exersaucers <sup>™</sup> / Activity Centers	Baby must be able to sit up on his own and control his head movement. Adjust the height of the seat so that only the baby's toes are touching the floor. The baby's feet should not be firmly planted on the floor. If the seat is designed to turn, it should be locked so it can't turn. Keep stabilizer / legs of the Exersaucer <sup>®</sup> down in a locked position at all times to prevent tilting / tipping.	5 to 12 months	No more than 15 minutes at a time 2 times / day
Bouncy Chairs / Bouncers	Always use safety straps. Use only floors and away from stairs to prevent falls from raised surfaces. If baby falls asleep, move to safety approved crib or playpen.	Newborn to 6 months	No more than 15 minutes at a time 2 times / day
Jumpers (that attach to door frame or ceiling)	There have been several reports of the spring / clamp breaking on various models of jumpers.	<b>Do Not Use</b>	<b>Do Not Use</b>
Car Seats	Use only for transportation. Always use safety straps.		
High Chairs	Wait until the baby can sit on his own. Always use safety straps. Make sure highchair has crotch guard and securely locking tray. Do not place baby in high chair until you are ready to feed him. Remove the child when he is finished eating.	5 to 24 months	Use for eating only
©Bumbo Seat	Always use safety straps. Only use on-floor or level ground surface. Avoid placing on hard tile surface. Never use on raised surface or in or near water. Child must be non-mobile.	When able to support his/her head	No more than 15 minutes at a time 2 times / day
Rock 'n Play <sup>™™</sup> Sleeper	Not approved by American Academy of Pediatrics for sleeping. Has also been known to contribute to flat heads and tight neck muscles.	<b>Do Not Use</b>	<b>Do Not Use</b>
Boppy <sup>™</sup> Pillow	Pillows are not allowed by American Academy of Pediatrics under 12 months of age. Do not use the Boppy <sup>®</sup> Pillow for sleeping.	Use only for breastfeeding	Use only for breastfeeding

**Do not leave your baby sleeping in his car seat once you have reached your destination**

**CAUTION:** Infants should not be allowed to sleep in equipment. If an infant falls asleep while using equipment, it is recommended to promptly remove the infant and place on the infant's back in a safety approved crib or playpen. When using any equipment, children should always be within view of an adult. Make sure the child can't reach furniture, dangling appliance cords, curtain pulls/blind cords, hot surfaces/appliances, or other potential safety hazards. Keep equipment on level ground; never use any equipment on an elevated surface, incline or near the top of a stairway. Always use equipment according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Check periodically on the Consumer Product Safety Commission website at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) for equipment recalls.

**References:** CFOC – 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. 2011; [www.babycenter.com](http://www.babycenter.com); [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov); [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org); "Simple Steps", Karen Miller, 1999 Gyphon House; CAFGCC Standards, 2006; ©Bumbo Seat Instructions for Safe Use, [www.bumbo.com](http://www.bumbo.com), 2013; Child Care Aware of North Dakota [www.ndchildcare.org](http://www.ndchildcare.org); RetroBaby, Anne Zachary, Phd OTR/I, 2014; [MaMaOT.com/beware-the-baby-bumbo-seat](http://MaMaOT.com/beware-the-baby-bumbo-seat); [Day2DayParenting.com/walkers-exersaucers-jumpers-impact-babys-development](http://Day2DayParenting.com/walkers-exersaucers-jumpers-impact-babys-development); Exeter Pediatric Rehabilitation and Exeter Hospital Newborn Home Visit Program

