

PROTECT ME, DAD

Speaking for the Baby x SMS4dads Campaign

Your baby is never going to be more fragile than in the early months after the birth. If things aren't right, they can't go outside or pull up a blanket, they rely on you to check.

- Is the environment safe?
- Can the dog or the cat get in?
- Is it too warm or getting too cold?

If your baby is uncomfortable they will let you know by crying and fussing. But there are some dangers that babies can't recognise. They won't know that cigarette smoke is damaging their lungs or that too much sunlight is damaging their skin. That's where you come in. After your baby is in your arms a part of your brain switches on, just like a monitor, asking "Is everything OK?" Dads are a key part of the protection system that babies need.

Protect me, Dad



Every bit of cigarette smoke, wherever it comes from, has a bad effect on my blood Dad. Please stop smokers from getting too close.

Watch me, Dad!

Watch me on the
change table dad. I
might start rolling
over soon and I don't
know I can't fly.

I gotcha!



By the time that your baby is crawling and trying to stand you will probably have started baby-proofing your home: covering the power points, making sure that there is nothing heavy to pull over, putting a gate at the top of the steps. But some dangers happen early on as babies learn to roll over.

Babies don't know that they can't fly and they can't help trying to roll over once their muscles are strong enough. They might figure out this move just when you are changing them on the change table. If that happens, they will need your hands to keep them safe. And later when they are learning to sit up, they'll need you to make sure they have something soft for their head to land on when they topple over.

Babies are programmed to try all sorts of moves even when it could be dangerous. Luckily they have dads to look out for them and keep them safe.

*Written by A/Prof Richard Fletcher and Dr Bronwyn Leigh
for SMS4dads and the Centre for Perinatal Psychology.*

Illustrations by Jess Racklyeft for the Speaking for the Baby Campaign.

