

## **Baby Bath Seats and Rings**

**Definition:** Baby bath seats and rings are devices used to hold babies in an upright position while in a regular bathtub. Some parents use baby bath seats or rings to free up their hands while washing a baby in the bathtub. Suction cups fasten the seat or ring to the bottom of the tub, holding the baby in a stable position in the water. Some of these seats or rings have an arm that attaches to the side of the bathtub to keep the seat in place.

### **Q: When are baby bath seats and rings used?**

A: Baby bath seats and rings are meant for use with babies between the ages of approximately five to ten months old. At this stage, babies have often outgrown a baby bath, but they cannot pull themselves up into a standing position. Once a baby is able to pull themselves up to a standing position, around approximately 10 months of age, baby bath seats and rings should no longer be used. It is important to remember that babies develop at different rates, and the suggested age range for a baby bath seat may not be appropriate for your baby.

### **Q: What are the risks associated with baby bath seats?**

A: According to an Ontario coroner, baby bath seats give parents a “false sense of security”, which has resulted in an increased number of incidences of infant drowning or injury. This is because babies often look safe, secure, and well supported in baby bath seats and rings, making some parents feel confident that they can safely leave their baby unsupervised while in the bathtub. However, these devices are only meant to be used under the supervision of an adult and can present a drowning risk if the child is left alone.

### **Q: How can my baby be injured by a baby bath seat or ring?**

A: There are a number of ways that baby bath seats or rings can result in the child becoming submerged in water. Babies can accidentally slip both their legs through a single leg opening, becoming trapped underwater. Some parents have had problems with suction cups that do not securely fasten to the tub, that break off, or are missing entirely from the product. This can result in the baby tipping into the water. Also, if your baby is able to pull themselves into a standing position, they may be able to climb out of the seat and fall into the water.

*According to professionals, baby bath seats and bath rings give parents a “false sense of security” (CBC News, 2007)*

*Since 1983, there have been approximately 12 baby drowning deaths and at least 25 cases where babies almost drowned while using baby bath seats in Canada (Health Canada, 2000)*

*Improper use of baby bath seats or rings can lead to severe brain damage associated with drowning or death (Health Canada, 2007)*

### Tips for Safer Use of a Baby Bath Seat or Ring

- NEVER leave a baby in a bath seat or ring without adult supervision
- DO NOT leave an older child in charge of a baby in the bathtub
- Check the product before each use to ensure there is no damage
- Prepare for bath time in advance: bring towels, clothes, diapers, and anything else you might need
- Between 2.5 to 5 centimeters of water (1 to 2 inches) is enough for your baby to splash and play while being washed
- Stop using a bath seat or ring AS SOON AS your baby can pull themselves up into a standing position

#### Q: If baby bath seats and rings are dangerous, why are they available?

A: Millions of parents use baby bath rings without any problems. However, due to several incidences of drowning or injury, interest groups in Canada, the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom have called for a ban on these products. Although bath seats and rings have not been banned, several countries have made it mandatory to place a label on the product warning parents that the device is not a safety aid.

#### Q: How can I reduce the risks associated with using these devices?

A: It is up to the parent to decide whether to use a baby bath seat or ring. Whether or not you choose to use one, it is important to remember that **children under the age of five must NEVER be left in the bathtub without adult supervision**. Even if a baby looks safe and secure, always keep them within arms reach. Some incidences of bathtub drowning or injury have occurred with a parent in the room. Keep your hand on your baby at all times during their bath. Never leave your baby without adult supervision even if you have left an older child in charge - many incidences of drowning or injury happened when an older sibling was left to supervise the baby. Baby bath seats and rings are NOT safety devices and should never be used as such. If you do use a baby bath seat or ring with your child, be sure that you do not leave them alone, for even a moment – a child can drown quickly and quietly in even a few inches of water!

For more information on baby bath seats or rings, visit our website at [www.bccsr.ca](http://www.bccsr.ca) or call toll-free at 1-877-388-8755.

**“Whether a child is in a bath seat or not, the main danger to an infant in the bath is being left unsupervised” (ACAP)**

#### Resources

- Action on Children’s Accidents Project (ACAP).  
[http://www.bprpct.nhs.uk/acap/oct\\_newsletter\\_05.pdf](http://www.bprpct.nhs.uk/acap/oct_newsletter_05.pdf)
- BC Children’s Hospital. <http://www.bcchildrens.ca/NR/rdonlyres/7D4F2339-B38F-4BB9-BFA0-C5487226F73E/11009/Baby20bath20seat20warning20Oct2005.pdf>
- Health Canada.  
[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/cons/bath\\_seat-sieges\\_de\\_bain\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/cps-spc/pubs/cons/bath_seat-sieges_de_bain_e.html)
- CBC News. <http://www.cbc.ca/health/story/2007/06/05/baby-bath-seats.html>
- SafeKids.  
<http://www.safekidscanada.ca/SKCFForParents/section.asp?sID=10774&ss=Product+Safety+%28DRAFT%29&ssID=24881&sss=Bath+Seats&sssID=24912>