

Benefits of Using a Baby Sling

Many parents practice babywearing or carrying their infant in a sling. Many parents claim this practice makes child care easier because the baby is less likely to fuss and the parent develops a strong bond with the baby, often knowing the exact cause of the crying. There are many other benefits of babywearing as well. A very young infant, less than three months old, often wants to be held almost constantly. This used to mean the mother either has to constantly carry the baby and neglect her housework, or take care of the house and let the baby fuss in his or her bed. With a baby sling, a mother can carry the baby close to her body while still having her hands free to do housework. Another benefit of having your hands free is being able to care for older children, if you have them. You do not have to stop what you are doing for 15 to 30 minutes while you feed your baby. Carrying your baby in a sling also benefits breast-feeding. With a sling, you can nurse your baby in public and not worry about accidentally exposing your breast. This can be a big help if you have to take an extended trip away from your house and choose to take your baby with you instead of using a child care provider. Some infants arch their back or tense up when they nurse. These babies seem to eat better when they are moving. Sometimes a baby doesn't gain weight and there doesn't seem to be a reason for the lack of weight gain. These babies may benefit from being in a sling because the sling promotes closeness to mom. This closeness encourages frequent breast-feeding, which will help the baby gain weight. When you have a baby that wants to be held all the time and you hold him or her, you frequently experience back and/or shoulder pain. A sling can help prevent this pain, when worn correctly, because the weight is more evenly distributed and you aren't contorted into an uncomfortable position trying to make your baby comfortable. If your baby seems to be extraordinarily fussy and gassy, your baby may have colic. Carrying your baby in a sling can also help with the crying and colic because being near you calms and comforts your baby. A study done in 1986 showed that babies carried at least three hours a day cried about 50% less than babies carried less than three hours a day. Another potential benefit for your baby is increased learning. Babies carried in slings have more alert times compared to babies who are laid in bassinets or cribs after each feeding. Carrying your baby can also speed his or her speech development because a carried baby is exposed to more conversation. Carried babies also see more of the world because they are with their parents for an extended part of the day, instead of lying in a bed all day. The final benefit of sling use is for the parents. By carrying your baby close to your body for most of the day, you bond quicker and better than if you did not. This causes the parent to feel more confident in the parenting role, which means you feel better about yourself and your baby can sense that, keeping the baby calmer during the day. The frequent touching and feeding stimulates the mothering hormone, also making you more confident as you care for your baby.

About the Author

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