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caring for a baby

Breast feeding

The fact that the mother is taking antiepileptic medicine, although an obvious concern, should not be problematic as far as breast feeding goes.

There will be small traces of antiepileptic drug in breast milk but this is not harmful.

Concerns about dropping the baby if a seizure occurs can be somewhat alleviated by sitting on the floor with the back to the wall and cushions positioned on either side. By doing this the baby will not have far to fall if the mother loses consciousness.

Breast feeding a hungry baby can be very tiring indeed and since tiredness is a well recognised trigger for seizures, time should be set aside for rest periods. If this becomes a real problem a possible solution is for the woman to express her breast milk using a breast pump and for a partner to feed the baby by bottle so that the mother is given the chance to rest.



Bottle feeding

Feeding time can be very tiring and since tiredness is, as mentioned above, a well known trigger for seizures a companion's help with feeding, especially during the night, can be hugely helpful.

Bathing the baby

Bathing a baby is a most enjoyable experience for both mother and baby but when the mother is subject to transitory loss of consciousness there are obvious risks. Bathing a baby by oneself is a huge risk and mothers with epilepsy should always have somebody in support at baby bath time. To lessen risk when alone it would be wise not to use a bath at all, but simply place the baby on a towel or changing mat on the floor and sponge down.



Changing the baby

The best option here is to change the baby's nappy with the baby lying in a cot or on a changing mat on the floor rather than on a raised table. The mother should kneel to the side so as to fall away from the baby if a seizure occurs.



Carrying the baby

It is preferable that the mother does not carry the baby when she is alone especially if seizures are frequent and start with a loss of consciousness.

Outside the home

When out with a pram a good idea is to tie a length of cord from the wrist to the pram so that if a seizure does occur the pram will not run away out of control. The cord should be long enough to ensure that the pram is not pulled over. An alternative is to have a break fitted which comes on when the handle of the pram/pushchair is released.

Purpose made cords are readily available for purchase from high street stores



Safety of medicines

Antiepileptic drugs, and indeed all drugs, should be safely locked away so that children have no access at any time.

Hot drinks

The last thing anyone would want is for the baby or indeed the mother to be scalded by spillage of a hot liquid. It is, therefore, essential that hot drinks are kept at a safe distance when feeding or cuddling the baby.