Podcast intro and season overview

Hi, you're listening to season four of the Baby Manual Podcast, the podcast that helps new parents all over the world navigate the everyday challenges that arise when you have a young baby.

This season will help you decide which pregnancy, baby, and toddler items you actually need and which ones are a waste of time and money. I'm pulling on the knowledge of hundreds of thousands of new parents around the world, other pediatricians, doctor moms, the Academy of Pediatrics, breaking pediatric news sites, all to give you the best information and recommendations that I can, because I know how overwhelming it can be.

I am your host, a pediatrician, mom, and author, Dr. Carol Keim. Hello, welcome to this week's episode of the Baby Manual Podcast. I am so excited about this one.

We're going to talk about what to bring when you're out and about. And traveling is something I'm really passionate about. And it's really great to find things that work well and are small and compact to travel with.

So let's get started. First off, the hospital go bag. If you want to know what to bring with you to the hospitals, check out the fourth episode of this season, episode 404.

Hospital bag and newborn car seat basics

I talk all about what pack in the go bags so that you're ready to go. You should probably have that packed at least a month before your due date, just in case you go into labor early.

and then you'll just have it ready to grab and go. You'll have all the stuff that you need in the hospital and before you go home. Now the one thing you absolutely have to have before your baby is born so that can take them home from the Hospital is a car seat.

So there are a lot of different options for car seats and there're infant carseats and they're kind of grow as you carseat. Now, I recommend an infant car seat when they're first born rather than one of those that grows with them, just because those tend to be a lot lighter, easier to carry around, and they don't outgrow it for a while.

So it's a good idea to have an infinite one or even one that has a newborn insert that comes with it, because these are best for the little, little babies when their very firstborn.

And you'll want a base for that car seat that it can clip into in the car. A lot of car seats will have something that they just, you install the base and that stays in car and then the seat snaps right into it.

My absolute favorite car seat for newborns is the Duna and it is a little more pricey than others, but it's a carseat that turns into a stroller. It's like a convertible one where the wheels just pop out of the bottom of it and that will definitely save your back as a new parent because you have a lot of appointments to take your baby to.

and checkups and things. So you'll need something that's really easy to get in and out of the car. And if you're not going to have a Duna, then you probably want a stroller that goes with the cars seat so that you can just pop that car seat into the stroller and take the baby in with you.

If you have to unbuckle your baby to put them into a separate stoller, a lot of times that will wake them up and that can be a little bit more difficult.

I found that over time, things that were more difficult just made me not want to do them anymore. So having something that's really convenient and easy to use is great.

If you're getting a car seat, make sure you get the stroller that goes with it. Or if you have the Duna, it's an all-in-one, and that comes up to 36 pounds, so they typically last for a while.

I'll put some links in the show notes for the ones that I like the best. Also for the car, you need a mirror to see your baby and they make these mirrors that go on the headrest of the seat so that it faces the baby.

And you can just glance in your rear view mirror and you see you baby's face. So you know if they're awake, if their sleeping and make sure that they are okay.

Remember that car seats are not designed to be safe sleep spaces. They are safe but they aren't meant to used for hours on end.

Car seat accessories and safety tips

Typically, most car seats allow for at least 20 to 60 minutes of baby being in there, but a mirror is really helpful because you can just check and make sure your baby's okay if they are quiet and see if their sleeping.

A seat protector is nice once your baby starts walking because their shoes get dirty and the feet are on the back of that seat. And so I found with my first I didn't have that and our car seats got pretty bad.

I thought, oh man, I really wish I had something to protect this seat, and I don't even think about it until it was too late. So having something on this itself is really nice because that can then just keep the seat protected for when their, their get in the car and they're putting their feet on the seat.

Things you don't necessarily need. So those all-in-one car seats that grow as you go, I really like the Graco Forever Extend-to-Fit outbiddling for that one.

It's nice because it can turn from an infant car seat to a child carseat and then it go forward-facing and it then can break down and become a booster seat, but you dont necessarily that.

Because I'd say a lot of times, so your infant car seat is meant for the first year, sometimes more, of their life. And babies need to be rear-facing until they're at least two years old in the US.

That is the safest position for them because if you hit the brakes, then their head is cushioned by the seat and it just kind of goes into their carseat.

Once they are forward- facing, if step on the breaks too quickly, they can get whiplashed. Their head will go forward and back. and that can be very dangerous in babies and even in toddlers because their heads are so heavy and their necks are relatively weak.

Those all-in-one car seats, while they are nice, you can find the next level of car seat, usually for a lot cheaper, and those can typically be rear or forward-facing and go up to much higher weights.

And then the booster seat. When they get to booster-seat age, Those are very cheap to buy. So what I ended up doing with mine is I had the Duna initially, I have the Greco next, and then ended just going to a plain old booster seat.

And I realized I never used any features of that Grego forever extended fit other than just rear-facing and forward-facing as a regular child car seat, so looking back I wish I just got in a car regular seat for that middle period of time.

They make these screens that can, so like sort of an electronic version of a mirror where there's a camera that faces your baby and then it has a view screen that's in the front of your car that you can look at.

And I don't necessarily recommend those. I think the mirror is nice because you could just quickly glance at your I

feel like with those screen ones that it could be a little bit more of a hazard while you're driving.

You're more likely to get distracted by it. And so I fell like it's less safe. So I typically don't recommend those. you also don' need a screen for your child to watch.

They make all kinds of things that you can put on the seat and basically like a tablet that goes there that the child can watch videos on. Babies don"t need the extra screen time.

There's plenty to look at outside of the car. So they don't really need anything to be entertained like that with. It's nice to have, you know, a toy for them to hold while they're in the car, but they do not need any anything electronic necessarily.

So when I say a tool, I mean like a teething toy. A car seat cover I have very mixed feelings about. They make these covers that go over the cars seat to protect the baby.

they can be helpful if you get one that's like a sort of a three-in-one like car seat cover, nursing cover. I forgot what the other purpose of it is, like maybe a scarf for yourself.

But those ones can't be nice if need a nursing and then also something to just stretch over the carseat if it's cold outside and you don't want them to be, you know, if its like windy you dont want to have the wind blowing on them.

But generally speaking, you don't need a car seat cover and you're not going to have them covered while they're in the car. And it's nice to be able to see your child when you have him in a seat and your walking around with them to make sure that they are safe.

So I typically don´t suggest carseat covers. You don't really need any puffy jackets for your little babies. Remember that they cannot have anything puff underneath the straps.

So those like blankets that could theoretically wear while they're in a car seat or a down jacket or pufy onesie type of jacket. Those all don' allow you to tighten the strap all the way.

And so those can actually be more dangerous because They're so padded that you tighten it down and it feels like it's tight, but then when you go to stop in the car, they still have some give to them and some motion, and your child moves too much for it to be safe.

So remember, don't buckle anything puffy under the straps in a car seat. They should just be in their regular onesie.

Diaper bag essentials for outings

When your child is a little bit older out of the infant stage, you can have a blanket that goes over them. And when they're very little, You can a thin blanket you put over.

Remember that babies under a year cannot sleep with a blankets because they will pull it over their face and they can suffocate. So you don't want to be putting blankets on little babies when their in the car.

The bigger ones you might want a soft blanket to keep in a car, but otherwise you dont necessarily need one. So things to put in a diaper bag. Of course, diapers and some wipes are going to be needed.

And then some diaper cream. You can buy small tubes of diaper that can go into the diaper. So it's nice to have a travel diaper and then your regular one at home.

My favorite two diaper creams are Aquaphor and Desitin or something zinc oxide based. Something petroleum based like Aquapor or Vaseline is nice too as a barrier.

And the zinc dioxide can help to heal up any skin that's broken down. I like the regular strength of the Desitan if you're going to get that one, not the extra strength.

Because I just have seen a lot of rashes with the Extra Strength one. It's just too much zinc and becomes irritating to their skin. You should also bring some Ziploc bags or some kind of waterproof bag with you.

If you have disposable diapers, a disposable bag is great because then you can just tie off the bag and throw away the diaper if it's a poopy diaper. And that will save your bag end car from smelling bad while you're out.

Then if you had cloth diapers something like a ZiPloc bag or reusable waterproof bags is a nice one that you could wash. because then you can take those dirty cloth diapers back home.

You should also pack baby clothes. I would say put two outfits for your baby in the diaper bag because sometimes they have blowouts and the poop gets everywhere.

So you want something to change them into. And then also an extra shirt for mom because, sometimes it gets on you as well. Also, babies spit up. Sometimes you just need that extra short for yourself.

It can be really helpful to have that. A burp cloth is nice to have in the diaper bag for burping your baby, for spit ups, and then also if you just need an extra thing to wipe them down with, it's nice have that burb cloth there.

They make portable changing pads. I can put a link for one of those that I really like. Those are great because then you can change your babies anywhere.

You can chance them on the ground or in back of the car or on those changing stations. A lot of changing station don't get cleaned as often as they should and I find that I was nervous as a new mom to put my baby on that because it often looked dirty and so it was nice to have a changing pad or just a thin muslin blanket.

The muslins ones are nice because they're really thin and they fold up really small but then they spread out really big and that can cover that whole changing area if you need that.

You want to put a pacifier in there and some baby toys or teething toys. I'd say just maybe two or three toys in their, just something to keep your baby entertained in case they get bored while you're out and about, while your in the car or in a store.

Just something for them to hold onto that you know is clean and that they can put in they're mouth. Some hand sanitizer is nice for yourself after you change those diapers.

Some snacks, either for baby or for your self or both. Once your baby's over six months old and they start teething and start wanting to eat snacks it's good to have some of those teeting crackers or pouches or something that they could snack on while you guys are out and about.

Sunscreen is good to have in there. And in a pinch, anything zinc oxide based also works as sunscreen. So you can use your zinc dioxide diaper cream as a sunscreen, and also you could use the sunscreens that have zinc oxides in them as diaper creams.

It might be nice to one that's both of those things. I always like to keep band-aids in the diaper bag, especially for when children are older or for older siblings.

They really came in handy to just have a couple of band aids around. You can put a change purse in there with some money in case you need to buy something while you're out.

It's nice to have a pen and some chapstick for yourself and then a water bottle also for your self is good to And if your baby is formula feeding, you can bring some formula with you.

Travel timing, vaccines, and packing tips

I found that two scoops of formula will fit into a one ounce bottle of those tiny like medulla bottles that you get. And so that, two scoop will make four ounces of Formula.

And so I would keep a couple of those in there, ready to go, just to pour into the bigger bottles. And then if I had my water bottle, I could fill it up with that.

Or if was at a place with a drinking fountain or with drinkable tap water, we could just fill up it with it. That was really easy. Remember, if you're doing the formula to also have a bottle and nipple in their.

Alright, so for travel stuff, now let's talk real quick about when it's safe to travel because I get this question a lot. And typically what's recommended is that your baby should have at least their first round of vaccines before traveling or before really going into any crowded spaces and being around lots of people.

And so if you're traveling by plane, I'd say breastfed babies, because they're also getting immunity from the breast milk, one round of vaccines is typically okay to protect them.

And after six to eight weeks of age, after their first vaccines, is when you could put them on a plane. With formula-fed babies, because they're not getting the passive immunity, then I usually suggest waiting until six months if you can, and because that's when the primary series is completed of vaccines.

So then they've had three doses of all their major vaccines, And also at six month, they can get a COVID vaccine and a flu vaccine. And so having all of those vaccines on board can be really helpful for babies who are completely formula fed so that they don't get sick.

If you're traveling in a car and you are just going to see family and it's just your parents and not very many other people, then really almost any age is okay.

But remember, it is helpful to have that first round of vaccines. Everybody they visit, make sure that they're current on their Tdap vaccines, which is the tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis, because most babies who get pertusis will catch it from a family member.

And pertustis is really dangerous in babies under a year of age. So you want to make that everybody's vaccinated. I would also suggest that adults that are around, or any children that there around also have their flu and COVID vaccines because those can also be more dangerous and young babies.

And then remember that car seats are not designed for long haul sleeping and so you'll need to plan very frequent stops while you're traveling by car.

Also, if you are going up to high altitude, just check with your doctor because a change in elevation sometimes can make your baby's oxygen go too low and that can affect their development over time and affect the brain.

So talk to your doctors before going to a high altitudes and really before any traveling just to make sure it's safe. In terms of how much you need to pack for them, I typically suggest about one and a half outfits per day for your child, because they do have those blowout poops or spit ups or whatever.

If your baby gets changed several times a day, then you might want more than that. But I think one-and-a-half outfits-per-day is a pretty good rule of thumb.

And a lot of places that you travel to will have a place where you can wash clothing if you needed to. Make sure you pack some socks for them and I'll put a link for the socks that I like that actually stay on their feet.

I found the old Navy socks were the only ones on my little guy that would stay put and everything else either just got pulled off or kicked off after a couple of minutes.

So you want some that will actually say on and a sleep sack to bring with you so that they can sleep in that because remember no blankets until a year of age.

I'll also put a link for my very favorite sleep sack. It's the Kaya Baby one. They're made with sustainable materials. it's a great company. And also it has a temperature sensor inside of it.

Sort of like the thermometers that go on the outside of fish tanks that change color. But rather than being a gradient, it very distinct places. So you can see if your baby is too warm or too cold or just right.

That's really nice one, but yeah, get a sleep sac that you love and bring that with you. you'll want to bring feeding supplies for them. So when they're traveling after six months of age, most babies are also eating.

I suggest a silicone bowl that has a suction cup on the back of it, because you can put just about anything in there and then they can't push it off of stuff or pick it up and dump it.

And you could rinse those out really easily. so I'll put a link for my favorite silicone bowls as well. That's what we used when we traveled recently and it was very helpful.

And then also, if they're taking bottles, you want to bring bottles and nipples for that. And a bottle brush is really nice to get with you so that you can get that bottle clean in between uses.

You'll want a carrier for them as well. So the three main types of carriers that I would suggest are a ring sling and some sort of a clip carrier and then a wrap carrier, for when they are younger.

So the wraps are usually designed for the first year of life and those tend to be really easy to use once you figure out how to you use it and you can see your baby and just wrap them around you.

Ring slings are real easy as well. They're very quick in and out. You don't have to, there's not a lot of setup like there is with the wrap. You just kind of put it over a shoulder, get it adjusted, and get them tightened in there.

And you're kind sitting on your hip. The problem with the ring sling is that because they're not right in front of you, they are on one side, you can get sore on that side.

Sometimes it can be awkward to switch sides if you are used to carrying them on the side all the time. you know, pros and cons of the ring sling, but it is really quick to get them in and out of that one.

So that's why I really like to have that. And a clip carrier is great because it has your baby centered and you could wear it on the front or the back when they get older.

Those, you just have to kind of get it adjusted to your body. Then once you have it, adjusted and set up, then they're pretty easy to getting on and off.

Clip carriers, I've heard it described as kind of like jeans where you have to find the brand that fits your body and is comfortable for you.

Travel gear: carriers, sleep, and feeding

So, you know, the brands that your friend recommends is maybe not necessarily the one that's going to be the most comfortable. For you with a clip carrier, they have a clips that goes around your waist and then the ones that go over your shoulders.

It should have clip between the shoulder blades on the back. because the ones that don't have that, they tend to spread out and it puts more pressure on your shoulders and you can get more back pain from that.

So I can link a couple of ones I like, but I would suggest if you have the option of going to a used baby store or if

have friends that have clip carriers that you could try on, try it out before you get one or try a few different ones and then return the one that doesn't fit right.

And you and your partner might need two different clip carriers because they really are meant to fit certain body shapes. And so you'll find one that's comfortable.

I'm confident. There are so many different brands that are good. But make sure it does really have that support on your waist so that the weight goes to your midsection and not on you shoulders.

Then the clip on the shoulders to, again, relieve that weight back there. You can also carry your shirts and those can be really nice when babies are little for some skin-to-skin time, but you don't necessarily need one.

They work for a while and also as your baby grows they might get too big and the shirt might be too tight and they're not adjustable. So I'd say you do not necessarily carry shirts or skin to skin shirts, they can sometimes be nice.

You know, I'm a pediatrician, and I am going to push vaccines again. So travel vaccines are always important to get before you go anywhere. If you're going a new country, you can just Google what vaccines recommended for travel for that country.

And the CDC puts out a list of everything that's suggested. It's always the routine vaccines. Some countries have some extra ones that you should get there before going there.

And I'm a big fan of vaccines because they mimic the illness without actually causing the illnesses, and so they only make your baby have maybe a little bit of a low-grade fever, sometimes a discomfort, but it helps build that immune response so that if they are exposed to that disease, then they can fight it off before they actually get really sick from it.

If you are doing travel vaccines, remember you want to have them finished at least two weeks before you travel so that your baby has enough antibodies to fight anything off.

You can also bring some medicine with you, like some baby Tylenol. Tylinol is also called acetaminophen or paracetamol outside of the U. S. Or you can bring ibuprofen if they are over six months of age.

And then some vitamins are good to have with you. Some normal infant trivitamins, they have vitamin A, C, and D in them. And vitamin C and B are both immune-boosting vitamins.

Every baby should be taking vitamin D every day anyway, but the tri-vitamin are nice for when you're traveling because also that vitamin is in there to help them fight off infections.

And then emergency, which I'll link as well, that's a drink packet. So it just comes in these little packets that you can bring with you when you travel.

You just pour it into water and it fizzes up. Those are great for adults to have because it has vitamin C and zinc in it. And if you're breastfeeding, those extra vitamins will also go into your breast milk and help protect your baby.

Once your babies over six months of age, it is safe to give them a little bit of that emergency. Double check with your doctor on the dose of it because you don't want to overdose them on vitamins.

You can overdose on vitamin and it can cause things like kidney stones. So we don' want give them too much of vitamin C especially. But typically what I would say is if your baby is between 6 and 12 months, just like a couple spoonfuls of that emergency after you've made it for yourself and then you drink the rest of between 1 and 3 years of age, you can give him about a quarter of a packet worth.

And then after three years of age, they can have about half a packet worth. Then once they're over age six, we can

usually do a whole packet. But again, double check with your doctor because all babies and children are different sizes and the dose might need to be adjusted.

And it's all based on their weight. So your doctors should be able to help you figure out how much of the vitamins are safe to give them. Things that you don't necessarily need while you're traveling, you really don' need to bring a playpen with you.

I found that all hotels that I've ever been to and most Airbnbs that i've stayed at have a Playpen available for your baby to sleep in.

What you can skip while traveling

You could bring travel bassinet if your babies young enough for a bassinet if they're less than six months old. But after each six month it's good to have the play pen to help them sleep and you make sure it is one that is designed for safe sleep.

A high chair is something that's typically available just about everywhere. So once your baby's able to sit up and they're eating foods and sitting in a highchair, you don't need to travel with the highchairs.

Most restaurants have high chairs, and again, most hotels, if they have food at the hotel, they'll also have higher chairs there for your babies to set in.

And then you don't need to bring too many consumable products when you're traveling. You do want to have some diapers and formula and snacks, but those are also things that you can buy while you are there, and they take up a lot of space.

Now, if you wanted to leave space for souvenirs, then actually that's one easy way to do it, is to just bring a bunch of diapers with you because you know they're going to get used up and then, you'll have extra space in there.

You don't necessarily have to have all of those consumable things, just bring at least a few with you to get through the first couple of days and then you can always buy some more while you're traveling.

And special toiletries like baby shampoo, baby toothpaste, those kinds of things you could also get while your traveling or most hotels will have some baby products on hand and also most hotels have toothbrushes if you forget yours or if your forget baby's toothbrush so you can bring some toiletries but that's also something that you get while you're traveling.

Alright so those are all of the things we're out and about. I hope you guys have a great trip wherever you decide to go and next time we are going to talk about health and hygiene.

So I'm going talk what sort of medications you want to have on-hand when your baby is born. what sort of things are typically needed in the first couple years of life, and then just other general hygiene stuff.

All right, have a wonderful day. Thanks for listening. Thanks for listening. Remember all of the links from this episode are in the show notes and you can always go to my linktree which is l-i-n-k-t-r dot e-e slash d- r- k- e i- m.

If you know anybody who is pregnant or has a little baby tell them about this show. Maybe they would like to listen to this podcast they might find something helpful in here.

And if you know any friends who are pregnant and want to get them something for their baby shower, I would definitely recommend my book, The Baby Manual.

It's meant to be all inclusive. Really, all the questions that arise in the first year of your baby's life are in that book. So Baby manual is also linked in The Show Notes and on my link tree.

Have a wonderful day.