

## Choosing a Baby High Chair

High chairs have come a long way from the wooden variety of yesteryear. Today's baby high chairs have a variety of features such as wheels, one-hand tray release, height adjustment and seat recline. Before you buy a high chair for your baby, take the following information into consideration.

### When Should I Buy a High Chair?

Babies don't really need high chairs for feeding purposes until they start eating solid foods, usually after 6 months of age. Some parents prefer to buy a high chair early on, though, because high chairs can be useful as a landing place for baby even before the little one is throwing carrots. Even parents who are delaying the introduction of solid foods due to extended breastfeeding may find use for a high chair, which allows baby to join the family at the dinner table and see all of the action.

### Types of Baby High Chairs

**Plastic/metal (Full feature) high chairs** - These high chairs are usually the most convenient. Most models offer reclining seatbacks, adjustable heights, well padded easy to clean seats, easy to clean removable trays, wheels for good manoeuvrability and lightweight with easy fold-up for storage.

**Wooden high chairs** - Wooden high chairs are considered by many parents to be more pleasing to look at, however, they do have some drawbacks. Wooden highchairs are usually harder to clean, stain more easily, are heavier, usually don't fold and typically do not have as many features as the new plastic types of high chairs.

**Portable Highchairs** – These come in a variety of styles, from inflatable boosters or rigid plastic booster seats that attach to dining chairs, with harness straps, to 'clip on the table' varieties which are incredibly light weight and easy to transport. With the clip on models take care with attaching to glass top tables as the pressure may cause breakage and potential injury to the child and others.

### Is the High Chair Safe?

The number of bells and whistles on your baby high chair is a matter of personal choice, however, you should be careful to choose a high chair that is safe. Your best best for choosing a safe high chair is to pick a model that has passed the NZ safety standards.

### Look for Stability

A wide base and a low centre of gravity are very important safety features of a high chair. Give any chair you consider a good shake and imagine how it might stand up to a wiggling baby. Is it easy to tip over? Also consider that a nice, wide base is much easier to reach under when you have to pick up cereal and other food-flinging favourites.

### Check Wheels and Locking Mechanisms

A high chair with wheels is a great choice if you'll be moving baby from place to place for feeding, but wheeled high chairs should have strong locks on the wheels to prevent accidents and to keep you from having to chase the chair across the room at lunch. If you are looking at folding high chairs, make sure that the folding mechanism locks well and operates easily. Check to see if the high chair could be accidentally folded while in use.

## Height Adjustment and Recline

A high chair with height adjustment is a good choice if you plan to use the high chair long-term. You can set the height to be easy on your arms for the first feedings, and remove the tray and adjust the high chair to booster seat height for toddlers later on. Reclining high chairs are best if you'll use the chair to hold an infant. The recline feature is also nice for toddlers, who often fall asleep over their spaghetti after a long play day!

## Buckle Up!

Check the high chair's belts to be sure the straps are strong, durable and washable. There should be a crotch strap along with the belts that go over baby's hips, though a five-point harness with shoulder straps is safest. Another safe choice is a seat with a molded plastic post that fits between baby's legs to keep baby from slipping under the tray. Be careful with models that only have a loop to go around baby's waist - it's too easy for baby to slip out of the high chair and get hurt.

## Comfy Cushions

High chairs get very grimy, so choose a model that washes well. Vinyl cushions are easy to wipe down, but sometimes have sharp edges. Run your fingers over the edges to be sure they won't cut your baby. Cloth cushions should be made of thick, durable fabric. Be sure to choose removable, machine-washable cushions. You should be able to easily remove the cushions for washing and replace them properly without any hassle.

## A Tray That Works

Aside from being easy to clean, the most important feature of a high chair tray is ease of use. Try operating the tray with one hand. Does the tray slide out easily? Would your baby be able to remove the tray on his / her own? Are there any hinges, holes or sharp spots that could hurt baby's fingers? Look for a tray with a high rim to keep more food on the tray and off of the floor. Trays with a dishwasher-safe topper are handy when your baby paints the whole tray with spaghetti sauce.

## Safety Tips

- ALWAYS belt your baby into the safety restraints
- Never leave your child unattended in a high chair
- If your highchair is equipped with wheels, always lock them in place when your baby is in the high chair.
- Be sure that all of the adjustable latches including the tray adjustment, height adjustment, folding latch, reclining latch and footrest latch are all securely locked in place before you put your child in the high chair.
- Make sure you know the minimum and maximum weight limits of the high chair.
- Always send in your product registration card. This is how you will be notified in case of a recall.

BabySafe offers a wide range of wooden, plastic and portable highchairs and can provide you the best advice for you and your babies feeding needs.