

Safe Surrender of Newborns

Information for women in crisis



Safe Surrender:
It's in your hands.

In an emergency:
911

What does the Safe Surrender Law say? An infant up to 7 days old may be given to a responsible adult, legally and anonymously.

I have this baby I don't want. I am terrified that someone will find out. What can I do? Safe Surrender is meant for women who are scared, who want to keep their identity unknown, and who are not willing or able to take advantage of the other choices available to them. It is legal to find a responsible adult and hand them the baby. They may be a health care provider, law enforcement officer, social services worker or emergency medical personnel, or it may be anyone who appears to be responsible.

What other options are available to a woman who has a baby she does not want? There have always been ways for women to give up their babies in a safe and kind manner. Agencies can help you with prenatal care, arranging for the birth, and arranging for the adoption of your child to a safe and loving home. Contact your department of social services, county health department, or look in the yellow pages under "adoption."

What if I would like to provide health or other information about the baby? One of the concerns with Safe Surrender is that children will grow up without knowing anything about their history or parentage. That is why the more conventional forms of adoption are preferred. However, a surrendering parent can help answer their child's natural questions about family heritage and health history. Information can be given to the adult who receives the baby, or may be sent in a letter to the county department of social services.

What is the advice for women who are hiding a pregnancy? Seek prenatal care. Talk to someone you trust to give you good advice. If you do not have health insurance, your local health department or department of social services can tell you if you're eligible for Medicaid (which covers over 40 percent of all births in the state). Plan for the birth. Having a baby alone or with someone who is not medically trained can cause serious injury to you or your child. It's also a terrifying experience to give birth alone.

I had a baby and now I can't stop bleeding. Plus I have a fever. Am I in danger? If you have any of the following symptoms, seek medical care right away: vaginal bleeding that does not slow down when you rest, a bad smell to vaginal blood, a fever of 101 or above, severe headaches, pain in the abdomen or vaginal area, blurred vision, or a feeling of burning when you urinate.