What is babywearing?
Babywearing is carrying your baby using a baby carrier. Babies are born with the need for touch and closeness and using baby carriers allows parents and care givers to provide that nurturing touch, but with the convenience of being hands-free.

What are the benefits of babywearing?
- Carried babies cry less
- Helps to calm colicky babies
- Provides baby with comforting touch
- More comfortable than carrying in arms for long periods
- Gives you more mobility when traveling with baby in your daily life
- Care for siblings more easily
- Convenient – be hands free!

What are the different baby carrier types?

Ring slings - slings made of a long, wide piece of fabric that is attached to a pair of sturdy rings. Ring slings are adjustable to fit around you and your baby.

Pouches - a length of fabric sewn in a continuous loop, usually with a curved seam to form the "pouch" for a baby.

Mei Tais - Asian-inspired carriers that consist of a rectangular (sometimes square) body and four straps attached - shoulder and waist straps. Mei tais are used as a hip, front and back carrier.

Buckle carriers - soft structured baby carriers inspired by mei tai baby carriers, but with side release buckle closures. They have a main supportive panel, padded shoulder straps and are often used to carry baby on your front or back.

Wraparound – long piece of cloth used for carrying children. These (also known as wraps) are tied in various tying methods and can be used to carry your baby on your hips, front and back. Wraparounds with stretch (knit fabric) are generally used as front carriers. Woven (no stretch) wraparounds can be used for all carries.

Babywearing Safety
Babywearing can be as safe as carrying baby in arms. Here are some guidelines for carrying your baby safely in a baby carrier.

- Avoid placing baby in a C-like position, as this can push his chin to his chest and constrict the oxygen intake.
- Airway should be clear and open.
- The safest position for a young baby is tummy-to-tummy and upright. This can be accomplished in wraparounds, ring slings, pouches and mei tais and soft structured carriers.
- Avoid baby carriers in which baby is intended to be placed in the C-like position.
- For infants, the baby carrier should fully support his bottom, back and neck.
- For older babies worn with legs out, the baby carrier should support from the back of his knees to his shoulders.
- Baby should be carried with his bottom at or above your belly button.
- Baby should be visible to you while worn.

Online Resources
- www.thebabywearer.com
- www.nurturebabynaturally.com
- www.facebook.com/babywearingSafety
- http://tinyurl.com/correctpositioning
- http://babywearinginternational.org
RESPONSE TO CPSC BABY SLING WARNING & MEDIA COVERAGE
For infants of all ages: benefits of safe, correct babywearing outweigh risk

Syracuse, NY - In response to the advisory published March 12, 2010, by the Consumer Product Safety Commission regarding baby sling safety, the nonprofit organization Babywearing International, Inc., called on consumer advocates as well as advocates for parent and child welfare to encourage safe babywearing for the benefit of babies and their caregivers. When worn correctly, baby carriers are safe, even for infants under four months of age, and babywearing provides important health benefits that extend far beyond the convenience of hands-free baby carrying.

"Slings are wonderful parenting tools when used properly and safely," said Lois Balster, MD, FAAP, IBCLC, a San Mateo, California pediatrician and a member of Babywearing International's board of directors. "Using a sling incorrectly is like using an infant car seat without proper installation, infant positioning, and restraints," Dr. Balster explained. "It is always important to position your baby safely in any carrier or infant-carrying device."

Babywearing International views babywearing as a skill that can be learned. Many volunteers across the United States and throughout the world are dedicated to helping mothers learn baby carrier safety and proper babywearing methods. said Glenda Criss-Forshey, MS.in Ed, a New York Inclusion Educator and the president of the nonprofit's board of directors. "As educators, we welcome the CPSC warning as an opportunity to better inform caregivers and the general public about how to use baby carriers safely, in ways that provide many benefits for both babies and their caregivers."

"A recent resurgence in baby carrier popularity has led to the interpretation that babywearing is a passing trend," said Crystal Eastburn, another member of the organization's board of directors, "but today's parents know that it's a beneficial parenting tool that has been practiced throughout history." Eastburn added, "anthropologists tell us that babywearing has made a contribution to the survival of humanity."

In Babywearing, The Benefits and Beauty of This Ancient Tradition, Maria Blois, M.D., reviews the scientific research that identifies the following attributes in babies that are kept close to caregivers. They:

- cry less
- are more calm and content
- sleep more peacefully
- nurse better and gain weight better
- enjoy better digestion
- develop better

Furthermore, research concerning kangaroo mother care shows that correct use of baby carriers can be particularly beneficial for premature infants who lack the amount of time in the womb that their full-term counterparts receive. "And anecdotally, we've seen that babywearing reduces postpartum depression and can reduce child abuse such as shaken baby syndrome," said Criss-Forshey.

Babywearing International advises caregivers to follow these positioning guidelines when carrying young infants in wearable carriers:

- **DO ensure the baby's back and torso are well supported.** Make sure the baby is not curled
up such that his chin is pressed to his chest or his airway is otherwise compressed. Ensuring that you can put two fingers vertically between the baby's chin and chest is a good guide.

- **DO carry babies how they would be held in-arms.** Well-designed front baby carriers hold babies snugly against the chest and near caregiver's face ("Close Enough to Kiss").

- **DO monitor the baby at all times.** Make sure nothing obstructs the face or impedes breathing.

- **DO be aware of movements and surroundings.** In general, don't do something while wearing a child that shouldn't be done while simply holding them. Avoid heat sources, bumping and jarring motions, and other hazardous situations.

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For more information, please contact Crystal Eastburn, crystal@babywearinginternational.org or Glenda Criss-Forshey, info@babywearinginternational.org
Benefits of Babywearing

Medical professionals agree that infants thrive through touch; “wearing” your baby is another way to meet this need. But the benefits of babywearing don’t end there … babywearing offers many other advantages, some of which include:

• **Happy Babies.** It’s true … carried babies cry less! In a study published in the journal *Pediatrics*, researchers found that babywearing for three hours a day reduced infant crying by 43 percent overall and 54 percent during evening hours. (1)

• **Healthy Babies.** Premature babies and babies with special needs often enter the world with fragile nervous systems. When a baby rides in a sling attached to his mother, he is in tune with the rhythm of her breathing, the sound of her heartbeat, and the movements his mother makes—walking, bending, and reaching. This stimulation helps him to regulate his own physical responses. Research has even shown that premature babies who are touched and held gain weight faster and are healthier than babies who are not. (2)

• **Confident Parents.** A large part of feeling confident as a parent is the ability to read our babies’ cues successfully. Holding our babies close in a sling allows us to become finely attuned to their movements, gestures, and facial expressions. Every time a baby is able to let us know that she is hungry, bored, or wet without having to cry, her trust in us is increased, her learning is enhanced, and our own confidence is reinforced. This cycle of positive interaction deepens the mutual attachment between parent and child, and is especially beneficial for mothers who are at risk for or suffering from postpartum depression. (3) (4)

• **Loving Caregivers.** Baby carriers are a great bonding tool for fathers, grandparents, adoptive parents, babysitters, and other caregivers. Imagine a new father going for a walk with his baby in a sling. The baby is becoming used to his voice, heartbeat, movements, and facial expressions, and the two are forging a strong attachment of their own. Baby carriers are beneficial for every adult in a baby’s life. Cuddling up close in the sling is a wonderful way to get to know the baby in your life, and for the baby to get to know you!

• **Comfort and Convenience.** With the help of a good carrier, you can take care of older children or do chores without frequent interruptions from an anxious or distressed infant—which helps to reduce sibling rivalry. Baby carriers are also wonderful to use with older babies and toddlers; you can save those arms and go where strollers can’t. Climbing stairs, hiking, and navigating crowded airports all can be done with ease when you use a well-designed baby carrier!

References


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Benefits

If you carry your baby close to you in a cloth carrier, you'll find that...
...your baby will be happier, calmer, and more alert.
...your baby will have help regulating his breathing and temperature.
...your baby will have help developing her sense of balance.
...you will be more "in tune" with your baby, more aware of his moods and condition.
...your baby will be safe with you when you are out. You don't have to constantly unwrap or "check on" her in some device.
...you will be able to smell your baby all the time---yum!
...your baby will be within easy kissing and cuddling distance.
...you will be able to take care of your other children and yourself while your baby is feeling secure.
...you won't feel "trapped" by your baby, because you'll be able to go places and do things without guilt, since baby is attached to you!
...you will be able to go places that are difficult with strollers, such as up stairs or escalators, on gravel paths, grass, or beaches (or wading in a pool or lake), through crowded malls or street festivals.
...you will be able to go places where strollers aren't allowed or don't fit, like petting areas of a zoo, or into a church or movie theater, without having to find a "parking spot" for your stroller and worrying about its being stolen.
...you can catch a close connection at the airport (this has come up for us a couple of times), because you don't have to worry about fumbling with storage, boarding, and folding/unfolding of your stroller.

Wait! There are a few more.
...you can hold the hands of your other children when crossing a busy street.
...you can chase (and catch!) the other children if they run off at a zoo or park.
...your baby can be social or private, depending on his mood.
...your baby will probably sleep better tied onto you than away in a bed (at least when she's young), and when she wakes up she usually won't cry if you're right there! Besides, you won't have to interrupt what you're doing to go get her or check on her.
...you'll have less worry about SIDS, because you're aware of your baby's breathing.
...all that time you'll need to hold your baby, he will feel so much lighter in a good cloth carrier.
...your baby will feel secure in the womb-like environment.
...you and your baby will easily develop the special bond that comes from sharing a life.

http://cottoncradles.com/whycarry.htm
How to Sew

Sewing Cliff Notes

Here is where I learned how to make my pouch baby slings: http://mykarmababy.com/pages/BabySlingPattern.php

Here are my simplified instructions on how to make your own pouch baby sling:

1. Pick and pre-wash 2 yards of fabric. Here are some ideas for fabric: Home Décor, Quilting (as long as it is doubled), Stretch: (Be sure to get fabric that stretches widthwise and not lengthwise), Fleece (the best baby sling for winter), Minky fabric (so soft). You can try most natural fabrics, just avoid synthetic materials.

2. Cut your fabric in half widthwise. 44/45” fabrics will be cut to about 22” and 54” fabrics will be cut to about 27”. You should now have a 2 yard by 22” or 27” piece of fabric.

3. Fold fabric in half lengthwise, then fold up so that all four open corners are to the right.

4. Find your shoulder to top of hip measurement. Mark that measurement on the top edge of the sling. Make a second mark 1 inch longer than your fist mark: that is your seam allowance. Now mark the bottom edge of your sling; take your first measurement and add 3”. Make a second mark 1 inch longer than your first mark: again this is your seam allowance.

5. Now, cut a half smile from the bottom mark to the top mark.

6. Hem the top and bottom edges of your sling. (If you are making a reversible/ lined sling sew right sides of fabric together at top and bottom. Flip the fabric so right sides are out and iron seams flat.)

7. Sew a French seam along the pouch curve. To sew a French seam, start with right sides together and sew along the pouch curve. Next, flip the fabric so that wrong sides of fabric are together, iron seam flat and then sew again along the pouch curve being sure to encase your first seam. And last, iron your seam to one side and then sew it down and you have completed a French seam.

And that's it! You should now have a beautiful pouch baby sling.

To learn how to use your new sling and to see all the carrying positions, go to http://www.mykarmababy.com/pages/instructions.php

Use your sling to: Cradle Carry, Tummy to Tummy Carry, Hip Carry, Kangaroo Carry and even Back Carry
Also use your sling as a: Nursing Shield, Shopping Cart Shield, Lap Holder, or Blanket
How to Sew

Step by Step instructions with photos

1. Pick and Pre-wash your fabric

2. Cut your fabric in half widthwise. 44/45” fabrics will be cut to about 22” and 60” fabrics will be cut to about 30”. You should now have a 2 yard by 22” or 30” piece of fabric.

3. Fold fabric in half lengthwise, then fold up so that all four open corners are to the right.

4. Find your shoulder to top of hip measurement. Mark that measurement on the top edge of the sling. Make a second mark 1 inch longer than your fist mark: that is your seam allowance. Now mark the bottom edge of your sling: take your first measurement and add 3”. Make a second mark 1 inch longer than your first mark: again this is your seam allowance.
How to Sew

Step By Step Instructions with Photos

5. Now, cut a half smile from the bottom mark to the top mark.

6. Hem the top and bottom edges of your sling. (If you are making a reversible/ lined sling sew right sides of fabric together at top and bottom. Flip the fabric so right sides are out and iron seams flat.)

7. Sew a French seam along the pouch curve. To sew a French seam, start with right sides together and sew along the pouch curve. Next, flip the fabric so that wrong sides of fabric are together, iron seam flat and then sew again along the pouch curve being sure to encase your first seam. And last, iron your seam to one side and then sew it down and you have completed a French seam.
How to Wear

Part 1
To put your sling on, fold it in half to form a tube. Decide which shoulder you want to wear the sling on. If you want to wear the sling on your right shoulder, then put your left arm and head through the tube of fabric. The seam should be in front of your left hip. (Reverse these instructions if you want to wear sling on your left shoulder.) The sling forms a “pouch” for the baby.

Cradle Carry - With sling on your right shoulder, put your baby’s tummy on your left shoulder, open the pouch and slide your baby’s feet and bum in. Guide feet toward your left hip and lean your baby’s head and shoulders toward your right shoulder.

Tummy to Tummy Carry Newborn - With sling on your right shoulder, make sure the seam is in front of your belly button. Put your baby on your left shoulder, open the pouch and slide your baby’s feet and bum in. Let your baby keep her feet tucked up in the fetal position against your chest and belly. Pull up the top rail of sling to cover and support the baby’s back and neck. You want the baby to ride high up on your chest and have the top of their head “close enough to kiss.” I find that I like newborn slings to be slightly smaller than my shoulder to hip measurement.

Tummy to Tummy Carry (4 months +) - With sling on your right shoulder, make sure the seam is in front of your belly button. Put your baby on your left shoulder, open the pouch and slide your baby’s feet through the pouch and catch her bum in the pouch. The pouch seam should be parallel to baby’s spine. Baby’s legs should go around your waist and the bottom rail of pouch should support baby’s bum and upper legs (rail should be at about baby’s knees) Pull up the top rail of sling to cover and support the baby’s back and shoulders.

Hip Carry - With sling on your right shoulder, make sure the seam is in front of your left side. Put your baby on your left shoulder, open the pouch and slide your baby’s feet through and catch her bum in the pouch. The pouch seam should be parallel to baby’s spine. Slide baby around to your left hip so that baby’s legs will straddle your hip. The bottom rail of the pouch sling should support baby’s bum and upper legs (rail should be at about baby’s knees) Pull up the top rail of sling to cover and support the baby’s back and shoulders. If your baby tends to lean back or doesn’t have enough back support, you can do the “shoulder flip”-fold the top layer of fabric on your shoulder over and down to pull baby in closer.

Kangaroo Carry - With sling on your right shoulder, make sure the seam is in front of your left side. Hold your baby facing away from you. Lean her back on your left shoulder, bend your baby’s legs toward her chest with your left hand and open the pouch with your right hand. With baby’s legs bent toward her chest or crossed budah-style, slide your baby’s bottom into the pouch, with the seam parallel with her spine. Pull the front rail up to baby’s chest and shoulders and lean her back into your chest.
Part 2
Back Carry- Start with the Hip Carry. With sling on your right shoulder, make sure the seam is in front of your left side. Put your baby on your left shoulder, open the pouch and slide your baby’s feet through and catch her bum in the pouch. The pouch seam should be parallel to baby’s spine. Slide baby around to your left hip so that baby’s legs will straddle your hip. The bottom rail of the pouch sling should support baby’s bum and upper legs (rail should be at about baby’s knees) Pull up the top rail of sling to cover and support the baby’s back and shoulders. Now slide the sling and baby, keeping the baby’s spine and sling seam lined up, around your hip to your back. Baby’s legs should straddle your waist. Make sure the fabric is up over a younger child’s shoulders. An older child’s arms can be free. This hold works great for older kids who love piggy back rides as it helps them feel secure and they are less likely to strangle you.

Nursing Shield- Unfold your sling so it is a long tube. If you are nursing on your left side, slide your left arm through the hole and line the seam up along the top of your shoulder and down along your arm. Position your baby for nursing in between the layers of the sling with their bottom and feet hanging out. The sling is hooked behind your left shoulder and will be difficult for baby to pull off but you will still be able to easily peek at her by lifting the edge of the sling nearest your chest.

Blanket - Unfold your sling so it is a long tube. You can either place it over them and tuck it around them (works well when they are in a car seat or stroller) or slide them inside and snuggle them up (works well when sleeping or holding).

Shopping Cart Shield- Unfold your sling so it is a long tube. Slide it over the handle bar of the shopping cart to prevent your baby from touching or mouthing the shopping cart.

Lap Holder- Put your sling on. To have your baby face out, hold your baby with their back against your chest. Slide your baby through the sling and have her sit on your lap. Adjust the sling so that the sling is below the baby’s face and chin. You may need to slide the sling off your shoulder and down your arm just a bit. You can let your baby have her arms out or keep them tucked in (makes it nice to be able to eat with out having baby grab your plate or food).

Sibling Fun- I often let my other children hold and play with the baby and the sling helps them play together safely. I have my older child sit down and unfold the sling to it is a long tube and pull it over their head and create a tunnel by sliding it down over their shoulders and back. I then slip the baby in the tunnel facing them and allow them to play. The sling tunnel keeps the baby on the older child’s lap and even keeps toys from getting out of reach.
Service Ideas

Turn your sling sewing into a great service project for Relief Society, Young Women groups, or even Activity Day groups. It only takes 5 simple seams to create a sling making it a great project for even younger kids.

Create custom fit pouch slings as baby gifts for new mothers and grandmothers in your ward. (You can measure a pregnant mommy for a sling by measuring across her back from shoulder to hip)

Create slings for young women to use in their babysitting kits

Create doll slings for children. This would be a great gift for children with a new baby in their home – they can mimic mommy taking care of the new baby by carrying their dolls or stuffed animals around. It is also fun for kids to use a sling to carry their pets around (our kitty likes it for about 5-10 minutes).

Create slings in various sizes to donate to hospitals, shelters, or organizations that help new mothers. Try contacting the NICU (Newborn Intensive Care Unit), La Leche Leagues and Parent Support programs at your local hospitals. Contact your local WIC and Planned Parenthood offices to see if they would distribute slings to their clients who would want them. You could even ask your High Schools and Jr. Highs if they would like some for their Childhood Care courses.
Baby Bliss
It's a Sling Thing