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Information for You from Your Health Care Team

Infant Abductions, Rare But Scary

Syracuse hospitals are implementing some technology that keeps baby safer. When you have your baby at one of these facilities, you may notice a special tag around your baby's ankle or wrist. This tag works like the security tags on clothing. It helps prevent theft. In this case, the theft of a baby.

The risk of abduction is very small. Between 12 and 15 infants are abducted by non-family members from health care facilities each year. California, Texas and Florida are the states that have the highest number of abductions.

Who takes these babies? Although abductors can be any age, they are usually women. Frequently they are overweight and have a history of compulsive disorders, low self esteem and may have faked a pregnancy in the past. They usually scout the hospital nursery floor a day or so ahead of the abduction and use a lie to take the baby from the mother. For example, dressed as a nurse or aide, a potential abductor could claim that the baby needs to have a test done. Once the mother unknowingly gives the baby to the abductor, it may be hours before the baby is noticed to be missing. The nurses might think the baby is with the mother, and the mother believes the baby is in the care of the nurses. However, with the new "tag" technology, children cannot be easily taken from the nursery or from their mother's room.

You can help reduce the risk of abduction.

- Learn about the hospital security procedures where you plan to give birth.
- When your baby is in your hospital room, never leave your baby out of your direct line of sight, even to use the bathroom.
- Never hand your baby to anyone who doesn't have proper hospital identification. Question unfamiliar people.

The safety of a child is a parent's new job as soon as the baby is born. Abduction of a baby is one potential heartbreak that can be avoided with proper security and parent awareness.

For further information:

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). 1-800-The
Lost, 800-843-5678 or online: www.missingkids.com/cybertip

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