



Newborn Safety

During a newborn photoshoot, the safety of your little one is always the first and foremost consideration. Beautiful photographs of this precious time are important but should NEVER be achieved at the expense of putting a baby's safety or security at risk. Below I'll discuss some of the most frequently raised concerns about newborn safety during photoshoots.

❖ Lighting

During your photoshoot I'll use professional studio lighting equipment to ensure that I get the most out of your images.

In those early weeks, when your baby's eyes are still very sensitive to light, it's definitely not a good idea to get up close with a compact camera or smartphone with the harsh built-in flash going off inches from your baby's face.

Professional lighting equipment, however, is not physically connected to the camera. This allows me to position it at a distance away from your baby (even for close ups) and angle it so that the flash isn't firing directly towards his/her eyes. I have complete control over the intensity of the light and will only use the lowest setting possible to ensure sufficient illumination for your photographs.

The studio lights for your newborn session will also be used in conjunction with a softbox. This piece of equipment provides additional levels of protection to soften and diffuse the light.

Firstly, the light is filtered through two layers of fabric to take away the harshness that you'd experience with a bare flash. Then the shape of the softbox works to distribute the light evenly over the set, instead of it being a hard direct beam.

The end results are sympathetically lit newborn images taken without causing any distress or discomfort to your little one – in fact, babies don't usually even react to the lights at all!

❖ Poses

Not long out of the womb, newborns are still very sleepy, poseable and flexible. This means that they can be positioned in a variety of poses for your photographs or curled up snuggly without causing any discomfort or distress.

During your session, I'll ask you to help me arrange your baby in the most appropriate position for each photograph. With your consent, I may also need to handle your child to make adjustments to arm, leg and head placement.

This consists of gently guiding limbs within the range of natural movement – often using just a finger to make slight adjustments to positioning. It will NEVER involve pulling, twisting or applying pressure to force your baby into place.

Babies aren't shy in telling us if they're uncomfortable in a particular position, so I'll always begin with them lying the way they're most familiar with before building up gradually to more manipulated poses. This often starts with photos of them lying on their back, before rolling them gently onto their side then graduating to any shots of them propped on their tummies.

If at any stage during the session your baby becomes upset at being in a particular pose, I'll stop and we'll go back to the last position that he/she was comfortable with. While this may limit some of the shots that we planned for during your consultation, I won't cause unnecessary distress by trying to force specific poses. Babies are all individuals with their own likes and dislikes and we'll adapt your session plan accordingly for your own unique baby.

❖ Props

We've all seen those newborn photos with babies curled up in or on a variety of props – in fact, this may be something that we've decided on during your consultation.

Whether it's a simple basket or something more elaborate, your baby's comfort while using a particular prop is paramount. I take great care to ensure that whatever prop we're using, there is something soft for your baby to lie on and any hard or rough edges are covered up with clever placement of wraps, rugs or throws.

Although newborns have a limited amount of mobility, they still have a strong startle response so if we're making use of props I'll always ask you to stay close by with a steadying pair of hands in case of any sudden movements.

In some cases I may even ask you to provide additional security and support by keeping a hand on your baby while the photographs are taken – this can be removed later when I'm editing your final images.

❖ The camera never lies (or does it?)

Some images and set ups may simply be too risky for me to capture in a single photograph straight out of camera and this is where a bit of magic happens during the photo editing phase of your package.

At its most basic, I may edit out a stray supporting hand that was used to keep your baby safe or hold him/her in position. On occasion, this might also require photo-compositing, where I take two photographs with the supporting hand in slightly different positions then blend the two into a single seamless image.

At the more complex end of the scale are shots where your newborn may appear to be suspended above the ground – either on dad's arm/hand or in a basket or hammock. Despite appearances, I will never place your little one in a position where there's a risk (no matter how small) of a significant fall.

At the very most, these shots will be set up with your newborn held just an inch or two above a large beanbag - frequently with an additional supporting hand above. Quite often though, there's no need at all for your baby to even leave the ground by using variations on the compositing technique described above.

❖ Hygiene

We all know that little accidents can happen when working with babies – whether that's just a bit of dribble or something at the other end of the scale!

All the soft fabrics that I use for newborns are washable and are freshly laundered in between each and every session. Those items that can't be washed, such as baskets and props, will be wiped down with anti-bacterial spray before every use.

You never need to worry about your child soiling any item that we use during your session or about what may have happened to it previously.

If you have any concerns about possible allergies to either fabrics or detergents, I'm more than happy to discuss the products used before or during your session.

