



Protocol of how to handle and take care of baby scales

Electronic or mechanical baby scales are costly precision instruments that need to provide us with the correct weight of children. It is important to carefully handle and take care of these scales to ensure that they continue to function properly and give us precise and correct measurements of infants' weights. In some paediatric and neonatal wards these scales are used on a daily basis to ensure that the infants are thriving and gaining weight in a satisfactory manner.

Important guidelines for nursing and medical staff on handling and caring for the scales:

1. The baby scale should preferably be placed on a *mobile sturdy trolley* and the scale should *not be moved* from this trolley. The scale should be pushed on the trolley to the baby for weighing and the baby should be weighed *while the scale* is on the trolley.
2. If the scale is removed from the trolley, it should be picked up at the base of the scale and not by the scale pan or weighing tray.
3. The scale should always be placed on a *firm flat surface* when weighing a baby, otherwise the measurements may not be precise and it may lead to incorrect measurements.
4. *No files, books, note paper or any object should be placed in the scale pan* at any time. The precision of the scale can be affected if heavy objects are dumped there. If this is a common practice, the pan may also be damaged and may need replacement due to cracks in the pan.
5. Cleaning the scale: Should be done daily. Wipe the scale with a wet cloth and spray with an alcohol hand spray solution to ensure that it is clean and hygienic when weighing infants. This should be done to prevent the spread of infection.
6. Infants should be undressed before they are weighed in order to get a correct weight. Before starting with the weighing process, make sure that the scale is calibrated.
7. **Method of weighing on a mechanical scale**

	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap baby in blanket • Place swaddled baby on the scale pan • Read the weight value
<p>Place blanket in which baby will be swaddled on the scale pan and adjust the knob to zero. By doing this the weight of the blanket when weighing the baby is ignored.</p>	<p>Mother should swaddle naked baby in the blanket and place baby on the scale pan. Read off the weight value as soon as the pointer is motionless.</p>

8. Method of weighing on an electronic scale

- Each baby's blanket is folded and placed on the tray. A clean nappy can be placed on top of the blanket and then the scale is activated.
- As soon as the electronic display shows a zero value, the naked baby is placed on top of the blanket & nappy in the weighing pan by the mother. Only the weight of the baby is measured ignoring the nappy and blanket's weight.
- The baby does not suffer discomfort when weighed in this manner.
- **No transfer of infections takes place!**