

Car Seats



All infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing car safety seat as long as possible, until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by the seat's manufacturer. Most convertible seats allow children to ride rear-facing for 2 or more years. Because their spine is still developing and their head is large compared to the rest of their body, your new baby is at a high risk for injury in a car crash. The safest place for your baby is securely strapped into a **rear-facing car seat**. These car seats cradle their head, neck, and spine. So, they're protected if the car is involved in a frontal crash—the most common type of car crash.

The “best” car safety seat is the one that fits your baby and is installed correctly in your car. It doesn't matter whether it's the most expensive seat made—if it's not installed properly, it may not protect your baby.



Installing seat in car

- Tightly install car seat in a rear-facing position in the back seat of car
- Car seat should not move more than 1 inch side-to-side
- Car seat should recline according to manufacturer's instructions
- If allowed in your car, place car seat in the center position of the back seat

Did you know that every car seat has an expiration date? As a car seat ages, the materials may become brittle and break. Check for information on your car seat with the model name, model number, date of manufacture, and expiration date. And make sure you register your car seat with the manufacturer. That way you'll be notified about any recalls.



New to the ins and outs of car seats? Find a car seat fitting station and let a certified child passenger safety technician help you. Look for a fitting station in your area at <https://cert.safekids.org/get-car-seat-checked> or ask your hospital or a state highway safety officer.

Shopping tip

Use a stroller when you shop. Babies can fall from shopping carts. And carts can tip over from the weight of your baby if you place them (while sitting in their car seat) in the cart.

Car Seat Testing

If your baby was born before 37 weeks gestation or weighs less than 5 lbs 8 ounces, you may be asked to bring in the car safety seat and seat base for a "challenge test." This is to see if the baby can safely ride in a car seat without having breathing problems. During the test, your baby will be connected to heart rate and breathing monitors, then placed in the car safety seat in riding position for about 1 1/2 to 2 hours. The Pediatrician will review the test results before you are discharged. Please plan to bring the car safety seat to the hospital the night before your baby will be discharged.

Look Before You Lock

Your car heats up faster and gets hotter than you might think. Remember "Look Before You Lock," so you never forget your baby is with you. Children's body temperatures heat up fast, 3-5 times faster than adults.

**Never leave your child alone in the car.
Not even for 1 minute.**



Create a reminder

Put something you need in the back seat where the baby is. Something like:



Your cell phone



Your purse or bag



Your left shoe



Your work ID badge

Set an alarm on your phone or electronic device to remind you when your child should be dropped off. Make a plan with your childcare provider and have them call you if your baby/child is even a few minutes late.