



Car Seat Safety

Infants - From birth to at least age 1 and 20 lbs.

- Use a rear-facing car seat correctly in a back seat every time your baby rides in a car.
- Use the right car seat for your baby's weight and height. Infants are weighed and measured at every doctor visit, so be sure to keep track.
- Use the car's safety belt or LATCH system to lock the car seat into the car. Your car seat should not move more than 1 inch side to side or front to back. Grab the car seat at the safety belt or LATCH path to test it.
- Put harnesses through the slots so they are even with or below the infant's shoulders. Be sure the harness is tight, so you can't pinch extra webbing at the shoulder.
- Adjust the chest clip to armpit level.
- Use your baby's car seat rear-facing and reclined no more than 45 degrees, so the baby's head stays in contact with the seat and the baby's airway stays open. Read the car seat instructions.
- Keep your baby rear-facing until at least age 1 and 20 pounds. Use a rear-facing convertible seat longer if the seat has higher weight and height limits.
- Find where the front airbags are in your vehicle by checking the owner's manual. Never put a rear-facing car seat in front of an active airbag.
- Be sure all occupants wear safety belts correctly every time. Children learn from adult role models.

Toddlers - Older than age 1 and more than 20 pounds



- Use a forward-facing car seat correctly in a back seat every time your toddler rides in a car.
- Use the right car seat with a harness for your toddler's weight and height. Toddlers are weighed and measured at every doctor visit, so be sure to keep track.
- Use the car's safety belt or LATCH system to lock the car seat into the car. Your car seat should not move more than 1 inch side to side or front to back. Grab the car seat at the safety belt or LATCH path to test it.
- Put harnesses through the slots so they are even with or above the child's shoulders. Some seats require use of the top slots when the seat is forward-facing, so check instructions.
- Be sure the harness is tight, so you can't pinch extra webbing at the shoulder.
- Use a top tether if your vehicle and car seat are both so equipped. Tethers limit the forward motion of your child's head in a crash. If you don't have them, contact your car dealer and car seat manufacturer.
- Adjust the chest clip to armpit level.
- A child is too big for the seat when the shoulders are above the top slots, the tops of the ears are above the back of the seat or the weight limit is exceeded. Move to a taller car seat or a booster seat. Many children will outgrow the harness of a forward-facing car seat at age 4 or 5.
- Be sure all occupants wear safety belts correctly every time. Children learn from adult role models.



Boosters - 40 to 80 or 100 pounds

- Use a booster seat correctly in a back seat every time your child rides in a car.
- Older kids get weighed and measured less often than babies, so check your child's growth a few times a year. Use a booster seat until your child weighs between 80 and 100 pounds, is about 4'9" tall and can pass the Safety Belt Fit Test. For most children, that will be between ages 8 and 12.
- Inform all drivers who transport your child that booster seat use is a must when your child is in their vehicle.
- A booster seat uses no harness. It uses the vehicle's lap and shoulder belts only. Be sure the safety belt is properly buckled.
- Booster seats are not installed tightly. They sit on the vehicle seat; the child buckles the lap and shoulder belt and wears the safety belt like you do. Never use only the lap belt.
- Use the vehicle's lap and shoulder belts on every booster seat. Never place the shoulder belt under the child's arm or behind the child's back.
- Be sure all occupants wear safety belts correctly every time. Children learn from adult role models.

Safety Belts

- Move children from booster seats to safety belts in a back seat only after the Safety Belt Fit Test is passed in every vehicle. Return your child to a booster seat if the safety belt does not fit perfectly.
- Use the Safety Belt Fit Test on any child you transport in your car.
- Ensure that all kids sit upright when using safety belts. Never let them lean against windows or car doors or lie down. Never put the shoulder belt under the child's arm or behind the child's back.
- Inform every driver who transports your child that safety belt use is a must when your child is in their vehicle.
- Teach your child to use a safety belt in a back seat in every vehicle he or she uses. This is most important when the child rides unsupervised in vehicles driven by family and friends.
- Wear your safety belt correctly every time you are in a car. Children learn from adult role models.



Safety Belt Fit Test

1. Have your child sit all the way back on the vehicle seat. Do his or her knees bend at the front edge of the seat? If they bend naturally, go to #2. If they don't, return to the booster seat.
2. Buckle the lap and shoulder belt. Be sure the lap belt lies on the upper legs or hips. If it does, go to #3. If it lies on the stomach, return to the booster seat.
3. Be sure the shoulder belt rests on the shoulder or collarbone. If it does, go to #4. If it's on the face or neck, return to the booster seat. Never put the shoulder belt under the child's arm or behind the child's back.
4. Check whether your child maintains the correct seating position for as long as you are in the car. If your child slouches or shifts positions so the safety belt touches the face, neck or stomach, return your child to the booster seat.