

# Newborn Care: Installing Your Car Seat

Using an infant car seat correctly can protect your baby on every trip you take together, whether it's baby's first road trip, or just around the block. But many parents don't install car seats correctly, and this can put your child at risk.

Every car and car seat is different. To protect your baby, follow all of the instructions in your car seat manual, as well as in your vehicle's owner's manual.

In general always remember: an infant car seat goes in the back seat, in the rear facing position.

The middle of the back seat, away from any airbags is the safest place for your baby in a car. But if you have other children, check your vehicle owner's manual for correct car seat placement.

Car seats can be installed safely using either the seat belt or the latch system. All vehicles since 2002 are equipped with LATCH; Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children, to hold a safety seat without a seat belt. To install a car seat using LATCH: check your vehicle owner's manual to find the lower anchors in your car, connect the straps of the car seat base to the anchors of the car, make sure there are no twists in the straps, press down on the car seat base and tighten the straps until the base is secure. It shouldn't move more than 1 inch side to side or back and forth.

Now you can attach the car seat to the base making sure it snaps into place.

To install a car seat using a seat belt: place the car seat base on the back seat, thread the seat belt through the rear-facing path on the base, making sure there are no twists in the strap, buckle the seat belt, push down on the seat and tighten the belt. Lock the seat belt. Every car is different. Check your vehicle owner's manual on how to lock your seat belt. Make sure you understand how your seat belts work to hold a car seat securely. Make sure the base of the car seat doesn't move more than 1 inch from side to side or front to back. If it does, tighten the belt again.

Whether you use the seat belt or latch system to secure your car seat, when you put the car seat into the base, make sure it is at the correct recline angle for your child. Most car seats have a built in angle indicator to help you.

And every now and then, check to make sure your baby's car seat is still secure and has not become loose. If it has, tighten the straps again.

To make sure your child's car seat is the safest it can be, contact a Certified Car Seat Safety Technician to help with the installation. To find one in your area, contact The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at [www.safercar.gov](http://www.safercar.gov).

Follow all of the instructions in your manual to correctly install your baby's car seat. You will be less anxious on your very first trip home with your baby, and on every drive you take as your child grows.