

# Car Seats Aren't Cribs: Safe Sleep for Baby

Many babies enjoy gently rocking in a baby swing. They also like the motion of riding in a stroller or bouncing in a bouncy seat. This can be comforting to a baby, and also provides parents with a secure place to put their baby. In fact, babies often feel so comfortable in these devices they're lulled to sleep.

While they may be sleeping peacefully at first, a baby sleeping in a semi-reclined position can actually become a dangerous situation very quickly. Babies lack strong neck control. Since their head is heavy, it can slouch forward and block their airway: suffocating them. This is called positional asphyxia.

Infant car seats have become very popular for more than just securing a baby safely in a vehicle. With the invention of infant "travel systems," now parents can unlatch the seat from the base in their car and attach it to a stroller or grocery cart. They can carry their baby in the car seat with them anywhere they go. Then after arriving home, if the baby is still asleep, she's often left in the seat even longer.

It can be harmful to let your baby spend so much time in a car seat. Even if you don't want to wake a peacefully sleeping baby, it's important to transfer him to a crib or safe sleeping environment, unless you're driving in a car. And never leave your baby unattended, propped up on a couch, pillow or bean bag chair.

Even though baby seats and devices are convenient, when babies are awake, take them out and place them on the floor to play. Supervised tummy time helps them gain the muscle strength and strong neck and head control they'll need for rolling over, crawling and pulling themselves up.

And when it comes time for babies to fall asleep, even just a nap, the safest place for them is on their back in a bare crib or bassinet.