

Newborn Care: Car Seat Safety

The best way to keep your child safe in the car is to use a car seat properly. Follow this checklist for safety tips to keep your child protected in the car.

DO: Choose a car seat that is appropriate for your baby's age and size. Some infant seats will not work for newborns less than 5 pounds. If you are getting a used car seat, check that: It looks good with no visible cracks; That there is a label with the date the car seat was made; The seat has never been involved in a moderate or severe crash; The seat has no recalls; The seat has all its parts; The seat has its instruction book.

DO: Make sure the harness straps fit snugly against your child's body. The chest clip should be at armpit level.

DO: Take off bulky clothing, including snowsuits and winter coats, before putting your child in their car seat. After they're buckled, you can place a coat or blanket over the straps to keep them warm.

DO: Put your infant or toddler in a rear-facing seat until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by the car seat manufacturer.

DO NOT: Use any accessories that do not come with the car seat since they have not been crash tested, and may not be safe.

If you have questions or need help installing your car seat, find a certified child passenger safety technician at cert.safekids.org. Most will inspect your car seat for free.

Follow this checklist to keep your child safe and buckled properly in the car.