



THE 'S

OF CAR SEAT SAFETY

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with thanks to the Canadian Pediatric Society for permission to share their information.

Every year, more than 2,500 children between the ages of 1 and 4 years are injured or killed in car collisions in Canada. Many injuries or deaths can be prevented with the right use of car seats and booster seats.

What type of car seat should I use?

- Infants should be in rear-facing car seats until they are at least 1 year of age and weigh 10 kg (22 lb). Rear-facing car seats should be used as long as your child meets the weight and height limits in the manufacturer's instructions.
- When your child is 10 kg (22 lb) and is older than 12 months, use a forward-facing car seat. Use it until your child is at least 18 kg (40 lb). Forward-facing car seats with higher weight limits are now available (up to 30 kg [65 lb]) for larger toddlers and preschool-aged children.
- When your child is at least 18 kg (40 lb), he/she can move to a booster seat.

- Don't use your car's regular seat belt until it fits your child correctly. This is usually when your child is approximately 36 kg (80 lb) in weight and 145 cm (4 feet 9 inches) tall.
- All children younger than 13 years of age should ride in the back seat of the car.

Before using your car seat:

- Keep a copy of the manufacturer's instructions in your car and follow them carefully. As many as 80 to 90 per cent of car seats are used incorrectly.
- Make sure the car seat is right for your child's weight and height.
- The best place for a car seat is in the middle of the back seat.
- When installed, the car seat should move no more than 2.5 cm (1 inch) forward or side to side.
- Check whether your local fire, police, or public health department has a car seat clinic

where you can make sure your car seats are properly installed.

How do I use an infant or rear-facing car seat?

- Your car may have the Universal Anchorage System (UAS) or lower anchors and tethers for children (LATCH). It is now mandatory in all new car models.
- Check your vehicle owner's manual for the seating positions that can be used with the UAS. Secure the car seat using the UAS or the vehicle seat belt, carefully following the vehicle manual and the car seat instructions.
- In some vehicles you need to use a locking clip with the seat belt to securely install a rear-facing car seat.
- The seat should be positioned at a 45° angle. If you can't do this because of the slope of the vehicle's seat, use a firm roll of cloth (sheet or towel) or a "pool noodle" under the seat.

To secure your baby:

- The harness straps must be snug and threaded at or just below your baby's shoulders.
- The chest clip should be at armpit level.
- If more than one finger fits between the shoulder harness and your baby's collarbone, the harness is too loose.
- The seat handle should be in the position recommended by the manufacturer.

If you use an infant carrier outside of the vehicle:

- Keep your child buckled in.
- Don't put the seat on a raised surface, such as a table, because it may fall.
- Don't leave your baby in a car seat to sleep.

How do I use a forward-facing car seat?

- A top tether strap must be used on all forward-facing child seats. A tether strap is attached to the top of the car seat and fastened to an anchor that is bolted to the vehicle.
- Install the car seat using the tether strap and a seat belt or using the tether strap and the UAS.
- You will need one tether anchor for each child seat used in the vehicle.
- If your vehicle doesn't have a tether anchor, ask your vehicle dealer to install one.
- Thread the seat belt or UAS strap through the child seat as shown in the seat's instructions.
- Use your knee to push down on the child seat

while you tighten the seat belt or UAS strap.

- Attach the tether strap to hold the top of the child seat in place and tighten the strap.
- In some vehicles, you will need to use a locking clip with the seat belt to securely install a forward-facing child seat.

To secure your toddler:

- The harness straps should be at or slightly above your child's shoulders.
- Only one finger should fit between the harness strap and your child's collarbone.
- The chest clip should be at armpit level.

How do I use a booster seat?

- The shoulder portion of the seat belt should be positioned over the middle of the collarbone so that it does not touch your child's neck.
- The lap belt should be over the hips (pelvic bones), away from the stomach.
- Your child should be able to bend her knees comfortably over the edge of the seat.
- Buckle the seat belt across the booster seat even when your child isn't with you. This will keep the seat in place during a collision or sudden stop.

Is it okay to buy a used car seat?

- You shouldn't buy a used car seat because it may have been in a collision.

When should I replace my child seat?

- Many car seats now have expiry dates on them because of 'plastic fatigue' (parts get more brittle or break easily).
- Replace the seat when it has reached the expiry date. If there is no expiry date, replace the seat if it is 10 years old or if it shows any cracks or damage in the plastic.
- Never use a car seat that has been in a car crash, even a minor one.

Are there any other safety tips?

- Don't use any add-on features for car seats that are not provided by the manufacturer, such as a bunting bag, head-hugger, tray or comfort strap. These can affect the safety of the seat and can be dangerous in a collision.
- If it is cold, tuck a blanket over your child after he is secured. Don't put anything under or behind his body.
- Never leave your child alone in the car.
- Always ensure that the locking clip remains attached to the car seat when the UAS is used to secure the seat. This allows for the clip to be available if the seat needs to be secured into a vehicle that doesn't have the UAS.
- Fill out and mail the registration card that comes with your child's car seat. If there is a recall, the company will be able to contact you.

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