



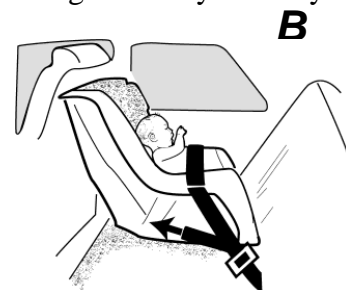
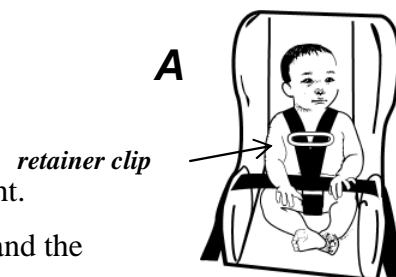
Safe travels

Tips on the proper use of your baby's car seat

Congratulations on the birth of your baby! The newborn services team at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center has developed these recommendations to help you keep your baby safe while traveling in the car. Please ask your nurse if there is something you don't understand.

Rules to follow

- Choose a car seat that fits your child's length and weight.
- Carefully read the instructions that come with the seat and the section on child restraints in your vehicle's owner's manual.
- Use the car seat *the first time and every time your baby travels in a car!* It's a Massachusetts state law.
- Put your baby in the car seat. The point where the shoulder straps come out of the back of the seat should be at or below the level of your baby's shoulders. If the straps are higher, move the straps to the lowest position. If they are still higher than your baby's shoulders – for example, if they are up by your baby's ears – you will need a different seat.
- Fasten the straps. Be sure the straps fit snugly. You should be able to fit only one finger between your baby's shoulders and the straps. The "retainer clip" (see picture A) should be at the level of your baby's armpits.
- Your baby's car seat should be placed in the back seat of your car. Your baby should face the back of the car, with the car seat in a partially reclined position (see picture B). Look for the indicator on the car seat that shows when the car seat is reclined properly. Infants and toddlers should ride in a **Rear-Facing Car Safety Seat** until they are two years of age or until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their car safety seat's manufacturer.



- Some car seats are “rear-facing only.” Others can be rear-facing when your baby is smaller, and forward-facing as your toddler grows. It is important to read the instructions that came with your seat.

- You’ll secure the car seat into the car using one of two methods:

#1- Cars manufactured after 2003 have the LATCH system for securing car seats.

LATCH stands for “Lower Anchors and Tethers for CHildren.” Cars with the LATCH system will have “anchor” hooks that are designed to be connected to straps on your vehicle’s seat. Please read the owner’s manual for both your car seat and your car for more information on how to use the LATCH system.

#2–You may also use your car’s seat belts to secure the car seat. Make sure the lap belt and/or lap-shoulder belt is threaded correctly and securely through the car seat’s belt path. You may need to use a “locking clip” for some lap-shoulder belt combinations. Please read the owner’s manual for both your car seat and your car for more information on how to secure the car seat using the seat belts.

- Do not use the LATCH system and a seat belt on the car seat at the same time.
- When possible, have the car seat base installed by a Child Passenger Car Safety Seat Technician. These technicians are trained to install car seats and can answer questions you might have about car seat safety. You can locate a technician in your area at www.seatcheck.org under “Inspection Locator” or by calling 1-866-SEAT-CHECK (1-866-732-8243).

- It is best to have an adult sit in the back to watch the baby (see picture C).



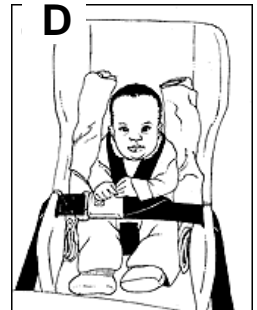
- Car seats are sometimes recalled because of safety problems. Make sure you return the registration form that comes with your seat and stay informed about recalls. If you are using a car seat that you did not buy yourself, if you did not register your purchase with the manufacturer, or if you have moved since you bought your car seat, you will not be notified if your seat is recalled.

To find out about recalls, visit:

<http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/problems/recalls/childseat.cfm>

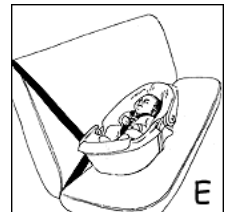
Things you should not do

- Never use a car seat that has been in a moderate or severe accident. The seat may have been damaged even if it looks okay.
- Do not use a seat with broken or missing parts.
- Do not use a car seat that is more than six years past the manufacture date. This date will be imprinted on the seat, or it will be on a sticker. Some car seats also have the expiration date on a sticker. Do not use past the expiration date.
- It is recommended that you do not put your baby in the front seat of your car. If you have to use the front seat, ***make sure your baby is not in front of a working air bag.*** You **must** “turn off” the air bag if there is one in front of your baby. Your baby must still be secured in a rear-facing position.
- Do not place any padding behind or under your baby in the seat, or under the car seat in your vehicle.
- Make sure your baby’s head does not fall forward in the seat. If it does, reposition the seat. You may use rolled towels to help support your baby’s head (see picture D). Ask your nurse if you need help positioning your baby in the car seat.
- Never leave your baby alone in the car.



Special circumstances

- If your baby is very small or premature, ask your nurse for more information about choosing a car seat for a small baby.
- Small and premature babies may need to travel in a car bed (see picture E). Your baby’s doctor or nurse practitioner will tell you if a car bed is recommended for your baby. You may also choose to use a car bed to transport your baby.
- If your baby is small, premature, or has special medical needs, he or she may be monitored in the car seat or car bed before you leave the hospital.



Over →

These simple steps will help keep your baby safe while traveling. Ask your nurse for help fitting your baby in his or her car seat in the hospital before the day of discharge.

The staff at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center hopes that you and your baby will have safe travels!

For more information

Consult these online resources for more information on installing and using your baby's car set.

- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:
General information: www.nhtsa.gov/Safety/CPS
LATCH information: www.nhtsa.gov/Safety/LATCH
- Safety Belt Safe USA: www.carseat.org
- American Academy of Pediatrics: www.healthychildren.org (search site for “car seat safety”)

This material was developed by clinicians in neonatology at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. Art is from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. This piece is produced and distributed by The Beth Israel Deaconess Learning Center. © 2012, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. All rights reserved.

MC0743 03/12