

Know the Facts

New Parents Guide to Buying an Infant Car Seat



The Big Picture

- The safest place for a newborn is in a **rear-facing car seat** secured in the middle of the vehicle's back seat.
- The "best" car seat is the one that **fits your newborn baby and can be installed safely** in your vehicle.

New or Used?



- **BUY NEW** if you possibly can because safety technology is constantly changing and improving.
- **NEVER** buy or borrow a used seat from someone who doesn't know the seat's complete history.
- **NEVER** use a car seat that has been in an accident or has expired (check date on the seat bottom).

Before You Buy



- **REVIEW** your vehicle owner's manual for car seat installation information.
- **DECIDE** if you will be installing the car seat using a LATCH (Lower Anchors and Tethers for Children) system or a seat belt. Both seat belts and LATCH are safe, but only use one at a time.
- **MEASURE** your vehicle's back seat to make sure the car seat base will fit.
- **CONFIRM** that the car seat will be compatible with your stroller (some aren't).
- **CHECK** seat strap label or online specs to make sure the seat is designed for a newborn.
- **VISIT** manufacturer's website for instructions, service, and personal support (chat or phone).

After You Buy



- **REGISTER** the car seat online or send in the card to make sure you are notified of any recalls or other issues.
- **READ** the instructions completely so you know how to safely install and use the infant seat.



When used correctly, a car safety seat **can reduce** the risk of infant death by **as much as 71%**

Installation Tips



- **SEAT BELT.** Pull the seat belt through the car seat at the belt path following the arrows on the car seat or label. Fasten seat belt and tighten.
- **LATCH.** Connect the lower attachments on the car seat to the car's lower anchors.
- **TIGHT IS RIGHT.** Once installed, the car seat should not move more than one inch from front to back or side to side.
- **NEVER** attach any toys, wraps, or other items to the seat or use seat inserts or supports that didn't come with seat.

Using the Seat



- For a newborn, the harness straps should be in the lowest slots.
- Remove the baby's coat or bulky clothing before placing them in the seat and cover them afterwards.
- Pull the harness straps snugly over the baby, buckle the harness, and close the chest clip at armpit level.
- Harness straps should be at or below the level of the baby's shoulders.
- Tighten the straps until you can't pinch any of the webbing between your fingers.

SAFE KIDS WEBSITE (cert.safekids.org/get-car-seat-checked) can help you find a local child passenger safety (CPS) technician who can review and help with safe seat installation.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) website (nhtsa.gov/equipment/car-seats-and-booster-seats) has a seat-buying video, car seat finder, ease-of-use ratings, installation help, and much more.