

Installing Your Car Seat

- Always follow the car seat manufacturer's instructions and the vehicle owner's manual when using and installing the car seat in your car.
- Always install a rear-facing seat in the back seat of your car. Never place a rear-facing car seat in the front seat with an airbag.
- Make sure the harness fits snugly on your baby; the car seat fits tightly in your vehicle; and your vehicle's seatbelts are locked properly.
- Consider having your car seat checked to make sure it is correctly installed and you know how to properly use it before your baby arrives. To find a car seat inspection station or car seat checkup event in your area, go to www.safeny.ny.gov

Other Tips

- Obtain the sales receipt for a car seat received as a gift in case it has to be returned to the store.
- Most car seats should be replaced every six years. Check the expiration date on the side or bottom of the car seat, or in the car seat owner's manual.
- Never place your baby in an infant-only car seat, on a table or other elevated surface from which your child could fall.
- Use only car seats that have never been in a car crash. Car crashes can cause hidden damage to car seats and they could fail in a second crash.
- Use only add-on items that come with the car seat or are available by the manufacturer of the car seat. Other add-on products, such as mirrors, toys that dangle from the seat, extra head cushion inserts, harness strap covers, and car seat covers have not been safety tested and should not be used.
- Use a car seat only for traveling. While it may be convenient to let a sleeping baby continue to nap in their car seat indoors, it is not recommended.

Know for Sure

Have your seat checked by a child passenger safety technician to know if your seat fits your child, fits your vehicle and to ensure it is used correctly every time. For a listing of car seat checkup events and fitting stations, go to www.safeny.ny.gov

Baby on the way?



Think safety today.

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health.ny.gov/publications/4208/

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**Install your baby's car seat
3 weeks before your due date.**

Pregnancy is a busy time when you are planning for your baby's arrival. Babies are fragile and can easily get hurt in a crash. A car seat is one of the most important items on your shopping list as you prepare for your baby's arrival. Choosing a car seat takes time and planning.

Time to Buy a Car Seat

Buy your baby's car seat and install it in the back seat of your car at least **three weeks before your due date** as most babies are not born on their due dates. This way you will be prepared for your baby's first ride home from the hospital.

It is important to choose a car seat that fits your car, your budget, and is correctly used on every trip. Not all car seats fit correctly in all cars, so choose one that can be properly installed in your car. If possible, install the car seat in your car before buying it to make sure it fits.

Rear-Facing Car Seats

Facing the rear in a car seat is the safest way for babies to ride in the car. A rear-facing car seat cradles and moves with the baby to protect the head, neck and spinal cord in a car crash.

There are three types of rear-facing car seats: rear-facing infant-only seats, convertible seats for infants and toddlers, and 3-in-1 or All-in-One seats for infants, toddlers and young children. No matter what type of car seat you choose, always read the car seat manufacturer's instructions and the vehicle owner's manual when using and installing the car seat in your car.



Infant-Only Car Seat

Convertible Car Seat



Infant Only Car Seats

Infant-only car seats are used only in a rear-facing position for newborns and infants. The weight limit depends on the model of the seat. These seats are small, portable, have carrying handles and sometimes are part of a stroller system.

Many car seats have a base that can be installed and left in the car. You can buy extra bases to use in other cars making it easier to transport your baby. Most children grow out of an infant-only car seat before their first birthday, so you will need to buy another type of rear-facing car seat.

Convertible Car Seats

Convertible car seats can be used rear-facing for infants and forward-facing for toddlers. They can be used longer than an infant-only car seat which makes this a more economical choice. This type of seat has higher rear-facing weight and height limits than many infant-only seats, so it is a good choice for bigger babies. However, convertible seats cannot be used as baby carriers and some types of seats may not easily fit newborns. This type of seat is less convenient to use than an infant-only car seat as it is designed to stay in the car.

3-in-1 Car Seats

The 3-in-1 (or All-in-One) car seat can be used rear-facing for infants, forward-facing for toddlers, or as a belt positioning booster seat for children over time. This type of seat may have higher rear-facing weight and height limits than most infant-only seats, which makes it ideal for bigger babies and allows children to ride rear-facing longer. Small infants may not properly fit in the seat and it may not fit in small cars due to its large size. This type of seat is a less costly option, but it is less convenient to use than an infant-only car seat as it is designed to stay in the car.

How Long Should My Child Ride in a Rear-Facing Car Seat?

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all infants and toddlers ride in the back seat of the car in rear-facing car seats until they are two years old or reach the highest weight or height allowed by the car seat manufacturer's instructions.



3-in-1 Car Seat