



Car Seat Safety for Babies: The Infant Car Seat

How does a car seat protect my baby?

The car seat provides support to your baby's spine and head during the impact of a crash to limit movement and decrease the chance of injury. The base of the car seat keeps the car seat from moving during a crash. Tightly secure your baby's car seat base using either the seat belt or latch system. Be sure that you cannot rock the car seat more than one inch. ❶

What can I put in the car seat?

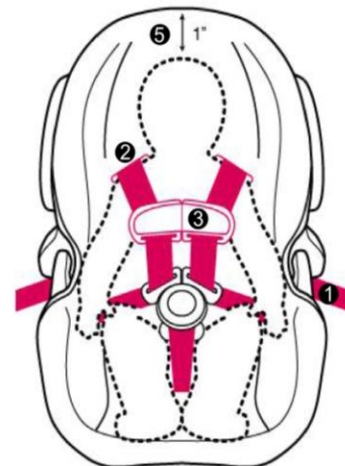
For babies less than 3 months old that cannot hold their head up, place rolled up receiving blankets on the sides of the baby's head. To avoid having the baby's head fall forward, adjust the baby's car seat to make it more horizontal.

Babies should not wear winter coats in their car seat because this decreases the support from the car seat. Once your baby is buckled into their car seat, keep your baby warm by putting blankets on top of them.

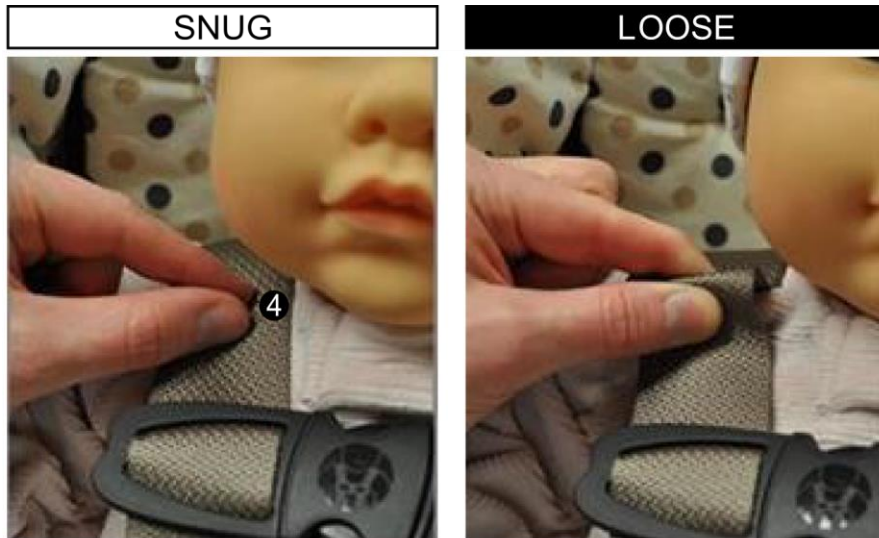
How do I buckle my baby into the car seat?

Safely buckle your baby in their car seat with the following steps:

- Adjust the shoulder straps in the back of the car seat so that they are at or below the level of your baby's shoulders. ❷
- Keep front harness clip at the level of your baby's armpits. ❸
- Tighten the seat belts every time so that you are unable to pinch any slack at their shoulders or at their hips. ❹



Graphic design source: USAA Educational Foundation, 2015



Graphic design source: www.parentthoughts.com, 2012

When should my child move to a booster seat?

Different car seats have different height and weight limits, but the important things to remember are:

- The child's head should be at least 1 inch below the top of the car seat. ⑤
- It is safe if your toddler's legs are longer than the car seat or are bent while they are in their car seat.
- Your baby should stay rear-facing for as long as possible, at least until 2 years of age. This is the safest position for them. Install the car seat in the middle of the back seat to protect the baby from side-impact crashes.

How can I get help installing my car seat?

- Mott Buckle Up! and Safe Kids Huron Valley (www.safekids.org) provide free one-on-one car seat fittings in Washtenaw and Livingston counties. Call 734-763-2251 to make an appointment with a nationally-certified Child Passenger Safety Technicians.
- Register your car seat with the manufacturer. This will allow you to receive important messages about safety recalls.

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Author: Elizabeth Ames, MD, PhD

Reviewer: Gwendolyn Zirngibl, MD

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