

# CAR SEAT SAFETY TIPS



Babies are at greater risk of injury in crashes. This is because babies' spines are developing and their heads are large for their bodies. In a crash, when your baby rides rear-facing in a child safety seat, her upper body — head, neck and spine — is cradled by the back of the child safety seat in the case of a frontal crash, which is the most common type of crash.

The following are some important child safety seat tips for your baby:

- Your infant or toddler should ride in a rear-facing car safety seat as long as possible, until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their seat. Most convertible seats have limits that will allow children to ride rear-facing for two years or more. Don't be concerned if your child's legs bend at the knees or touch the back seat of the car when rear-facing; this will not harm their feet or knees.
- The shoulder straps must be at or below your baby's shoulders. Child safety seats have several pairs of harness slots so you can adjust the harness as your baby grows. Make sure you use the harness correctly by following these tips:
  - ✓ *The harness must be snug so you cannot pinch a fold in the harness material after buckling in your baby.*
  - ✓ *The straps should lie flat in a straight line without sagging or twisting. The top of the chest clip should be positioned at armpit level.*
- Never put a blanket between your child and the harness straps, or underneath or behind them. For car travel, don't dress your infant in bulky outerwear; it can interfere with the tightness of the harness. Instead, place a warm blanket over your child and harness.
- Your baby is getting too big for his rear-facing child safety seat when their head nears the top of the seat. There should be at least one inch between the top of your child's head and the top of the rear-facing child safety seat.



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON INFANT CAR SEAT SAFETY,  
VISIT:  
[WWW.NHTSA.GOV/VEHICLE-SAFETY/CAR-SEATS-AND-BOOSTER-SEATS](http://WWW.NHTSA.GOV/VEHICLE-SAFETY/CAR-SEATS-AND-BOOSTER-SEATS)



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