

## Car Seat Safety

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children ages 2 to 14 and the leading cause of injury-related death for children under 2. When installed and used correctly, child safety seats and safety belts can prevent injuries and save lives. Young children restrained in child safety seats have an 80 percent lower risk of fatal injury than those who are unrestrained.

### **INFANTS - From birth to at least age 1 and 20 lbs.**

- Use a rear-facing car seat correctly in a back seat every time your baby rides in a vehicle - usually until your child is 18 months. Wisconsin law requires children to be rear-facing until they are both 20 pounds and 12 months.
- Use the right car seat for your baby's weight and height.
- Use the car's safety belt or LATCH system to lock the car seat into the car. Your car seat should not move more than one inch side-to-side or front to back.
- Put harnesses through the slots so they are even with or below the infant's shoulders. Be sure the harness is tight.
- Adjust the chest clip to armpit level.
- Use your baby's car seat rear-facing and reclined no more than 45 degrees.
- Find where the frontal airbags are in your vehicle by checking the owner's manual. Never put a rear-facing car seat in front of an active airbag.



### **TODDLER - Older than age 1 and more than 20 pounds**

- Use a forward-facing car seat correctly in a back seat every time your toddler rides in a vehicle.
- Use the right car seat with a harness for your toddler's weight and height.
- Use the car's safety belt or LATCH system to lock the car seat into the car. Your car seat should not move more than one inch side-to-side or front to back.
- Put harnesses through the slots so they are even with or above the child's shoulders. Some seats require use of the top slots when the seat is forward-facing, so check instructions.
- Be sure the harness is tight.
- Use a top tether if your vehicle and car seat are both so equipped. Tethers limit the forward motion of your child's head in a crash.
- Adjust the chest clip to armpit level.

### **Take the next step to a booster seat when you answer "yes" to any of these questions:**

- Does your child exceed the car seat's height and weight limits?
- Are your child's shoulders above the car seat's top harness slots?
- Are the tops of your child's ears above the top of the car seat?

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## BOOSTER SEATS - 40 to 80 or 100 pounds

- Use a booster seat correctly in a back seat every time your child rides in a car.
- Check your child's growth a few times a year. Use a booster seat until your child weighs between 80 and 100 pounds, is about 4 feet 9 inches tall, and can pass the Safety Belt Fit Test.
- Tell all drivers who transport your child that booster seat use is a must when your child is in their vehicle.
- A booster seat uses no harness. It uses the vehicle's lap and shoulder belts only.
- Booster seats are not installed tightly. They sit on the vehicle seat; the child buckles the lap and shoulder belt and wears the safety belt like you do.
- Use the vehicle's lap and shoulder belts on every booster seat. Never place the shoulder belt under the child's arm or behind the child's back.

Use a booster seat until your child passes the **Safety Belt Fit Test:**

- 1) Have your child sit all the way back on the vehicle seat. Do his or her knees bend at the front edge of the seat? If they bend naturally, go to #2. If they don't, use the booster seat.
- 2) Buckle the lap and shoulder belt. Be sure the lap belt rests on the upper legs or hips. If it does, go to #3. If it rests on the stomach, use the booster seat.
- 3) Be sure the shoulder belt rests on the shoulder



or collarbone. If it does, go to #4. If it's on the face or neck, use the booster seat.

4) Check whether your child maintains the correct seating position for as long as you are in the car. If your child slouches or shifts positions so the safety belt touches the face, neck or stomach, use the booster seat.

## SAFETY BELTS

- Ensure that all kids sit upright when using safety belts. Never let them lean against windows or car doors or lie down. Never put the shoulder belt under the child's arm or behind the child's back.
- Tell every driver who transports your child that safety belt use is a must when your child is in their vehicle.
- Teach your child to use a safety belt in a back seat in every vehicle he or she rides in.

## IMPORTANT REMINDERS

1. Be a good role model. Make sure you always wear your seat belt.
2. Never leave your child alone in or around cars.
3. Always read and follow manufacturer's instructions.

Sources: Safe Kids Worldwide, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, American Academy of Pediatrics.



**Kohl's Safety Seconds offers practical safety information about common child safety concerns. Kohl's Safety Seconds are produced through a partnership between Aspirus Wausau Hospital and Kohl's Department Stores, working together to keep children safe.**

**For a schedule of free car seat checks and additional information, call 715-847-2380 or 1-800-847-4707 or visit our website at [www.aspirus.com](http://www.aspirus.com).**