

Car Seat Safety

Rear facing: birth –2 years

- Includes rear facing only seats, convertible seats and 3-in-1 seats.

For the best possible protection keep infants in the back seat, in rear facing position until at least 2 years of age or until they reach the upper limits their specific car seat allows.

Forward facing: 2-4 years

- Includes convertible seats, 3-in-1 seats, built-in seats, or travel vest.

When children outgrow their rear facing seat (at a minimum age of 2) they should ride in a forward-facing child safety seat in the back seat until at least 4 years of age or until they reach the upper limits their specific car seat allows.

Information courtesy of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Booster seat: 4 years until 8-12 years old AND 4 ft 9in tall

- High back or backless booster

Once children outgrow their forward facing seats (at a minimum age of 4) they should ride in booster seats in the back seat of the vehicle. A booster seat should NEVER be used with only a lap belt.

Once your child outgrows their booster seat (age 8-12 and 4ft 9in tall) they can use the adult seat belt in the back seat until the age of 13 when they can safely ride in the front seat of the

Types of Car Seats

Age Group	Type of Seat	General Guidelines
Infants & toddlers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rear-facing-only • Rear-facing convertible 	All infants and toddlers should ride in a rear-facing seat until they are at least 2 years of age or reach the highest weight or height allowed by their car seat manufacturer.
Toddlers & preschoolers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convertible • Forward-facing with harness 	Children who have outgrown the rear-facing weight or height limit for their convertible seat should use a forward-facing seat with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by their car safety seat manufacturer.
School-aged children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Booster seats 	All children whose weight or height exceeds the forward-facing limit for their car safety seat should use a belt-positioning booster seat until the vehicle seat belt fits properly, typically when they have reached 4 feet 9 inches in height and are 8 through 12 years of age. All children younger than 13 should ride in the back seat.
Older children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seat belts 	When children are old enough and large enough for the vehicle seat belt to fit them correctly, they should always use lap and shoulder seat belts for the best protection. All children younger than 13 years should ride in the back seat.



Seatbelt and car seat safety

Your top 5 seatbelt questions answered

1. I'm Pregnant. Should I wear a seatbelt

YES. Healthcare providers always recommend wearing your seatbelt. In the event of an accident a seat belt is the best protection for you and your unborn child.

2. What if my car or truck has air bags?

You still need to wear your seatbelt. Air bags are designed to work with seat belts, not replace them. Without your seat belt you could be thrown from the vehicle or into a rapidly opening frontal air bag; which could injure or even kill you and your unborn child.

3. Should I adjust my seat?

YES. You should move the driver's seat back as far as possible while still allowing you to safely reach the pedals. Ideally, there should be at least 10 inches from the center of your chest to the steering wheel or the dashboard if you are a passenger. As your abdomen grows during pregnancy adjust your seat to maintain the 10-inch minimum.

4. Should I turn the air bags off if my vehicle has an ON-OFF air bag-disabling switch?

NO. Healthcare providers always recommend that pregnant women wear seat belts and leave the air bags turned on. Seat belts and air bags work together to provide the best protection for you and your unborn child.

5. What's the right way to wear my seatbelt?

The shoulder belt should lay across your chest between your breast and away from your neck.

- Make sure the seatbelt is not twisted or folded in any way.
- Never place the shoulder belt behind your neck or under your arm
- Secure the lap belt **BELOW** your belly so that it fits snugly across your hips and pelvic bone. As shown below.



Illustration from the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration