

Infant-only seats *must* always face the rear of the vehicle. Current models of Infant-only seats start at 1.8 or 2.3 kg (4 or 5 lb.) and have an upper weight limit of 10, 13.5, or 16 kg (22, 30, or 35 lb.), depending on the model.

Infants and toddlers simply do not have the back and neck strength to travel facing forward. In the rear-facing position, the force of a crash or sudden stop is spread across the child's body, and absorbed into the back of the car seat.

Using an infant car seat involves two main steps:

- ☺ harnessing your baby in the seat correctly
- ☺ putting the seat in your vehicle correctly

Always follow the instructions for your seat and your vehicle.

Harnessing Your Baby In The Seat

Always check the seat's metal and plastic parts before putting your infant in the car seat. In warm weather, they can get very hot.

Baby's bottom and back should be flat against the car seat back.



The harness straps should come through the back of the infant seat at the level of, or slightly **below**, the baby's shoulders; never from above. The harness must be adjusted as the child grows, both for safety and comfort.

The harness straps must lie flat on the infant's body. Any twists or folds will concentrate the crash forces.



The harness straps should fit snugly. Adjusted properly, you can get no more than one finger between the harness and the baby's collar bone or be unable to pinch a fold in the strap.



Infant seats come with a chest clip to prevent the harness straps from slipping off the shoulders. It should be at armpit level.

Only use items that came with your seat or ones sold by the manufacturer for a particular model. Never put any other padding underneath or behind an infant. The padding could compress in a crash, leaving slack in the harness.



For support, a rolled receiving blanket or small towel can be placed on either side of the baby's head or body. A rolled washcloth or cloth diaper may be used to fill any empty space behind the crotch strap, but only after the harness is properly tightened.

Harness strap covers come with some seats or are purchased as an accessory. Sometimes, they are too long and push the chest clip down too low, especially for a young infant. They can also cause, or hide, twists in the harness. If this is the case, shorten, or remove them.

Oversized clothing, bunting bags, cuddle bags, sack sleepers etc. can interfere with the correct use of the harness. If you want to use a blanket to keep your baby warm, harness her in the seat first, then put the blanket over her.

Do not leave your infant unattended in the car seat or put the infant seat on a raised surface. An infant car seat should **never** be used as a crib.

Putting The Seat In Your Vehicle



A rear-facing car seat must **not** be installed in a front seat that has an active **air bag**. The back seat is a safer place for a child. The centre, back position is preferred, because it is furthest away from the point-of-impact from any direction.

For side-impact air bags in the back, follow the vehicle manufacturer's instructions. Clear the area between the infant seat and the door of all objects. Toys, blankets, and even pillows could harm an infant, if the side air bag inflates.

At least 80% of the base of the infant seat should fit on the vehicle seat.

Check *your* seat's instructions to be sure that you have it reclined properly. Most infant seats have built-in recline indicators to help you get the correct angle. If your infant seat sits too upright, try adjusting the base or place a tightly rolled towel or a foam noodle under the infant seat, in the crack of the vehicle seat, to get the correct angle.

Check your vehicle owner's manual for information on using the seat belts or Universal Anchorage System (UAS) to secure an infant seat.



It is important that you put the vehicle seat belt or UAS through the proper path. Follow *your* seat's instructions.

Check to see that the seat belt or UAS is tight enough. When tightening the belt, push the infant seat or base down and into the upholstery. The infant seat should not move more than 2.5 cm (1 in.) toward the front of the vehicle, or directly side-to-side, where the belt is attached.

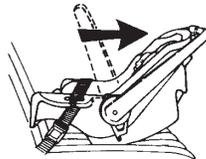


It is acceptable (and normal) to be able to lift the top of the seat toward the rear of the car or pivot it side-to-side.



Infant seats come with a base that can remain belted in the vehicle when you remove the car seat. You do not have to adjust and tighten the seat belt or UAS every time you put the infant seat in the car. It is important to ensure that the infant seat is properly attached to the base. All current models of infant seats can be used with, or without, the base.

Check *your* seat's instructions to see if the carry handle should be up or down when driving in a vehicle.



It is time for your baby to come out of an Infant-only seat when he is over the seat's upper weight limit **or** the top of the child's head is within 2.5 cm (1 in.) of the top of the seat. He should then go into a Convertible seat or 3-Stage seat, used rear-facing, until it is safe for him to travel facing forward.

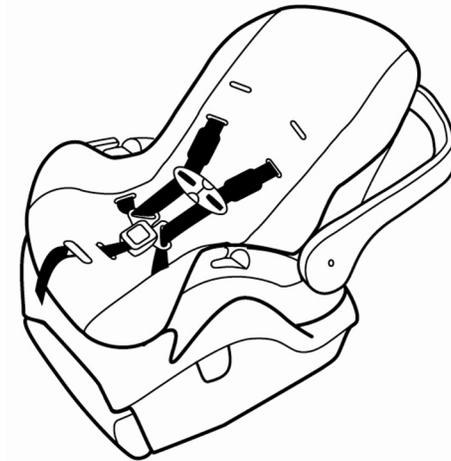
It is *safer* for a child to stay rear-facing as long as possible. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children remain rear-facing until age 2 or more, **or** until they reach the maximum rear-facing weight of the Convertible or 3-Stage seat **or** until the top of the child's head is within 2.5 cm (1 in.) of the top of the seat. Convertible and 3-Stage seats can be used rear-facing up to 13.6 to 22.7 kg (30 to 50 lb.), depending on the model.

For more information, go to our website: www.infantandtoddlersafety.ca

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Car Seats



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