



Infant safety and CPR guide



VCUHealth™



Congratulations!

As you hold your baby for the first time, you promise to always love and keep your child safe. You realize that your baby depends on you for everything and your child's safety is your responsibility. We created this guide to help you keep your baby safe by explaining the basics of infant safety from choking prevention to safe sleep to car seat safety. Please don't rely on it as your sole source of information. We recommend all new parents take a class that teaches life-saving techniques and discuss any questions with your baby's healthcare provider.



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Playtime basics

Babies explore with their hands, mouths and eyes, and enjoy toys they can touch or squeeze. Also, make sure you're providing your baby supervised tummy time on a daily basis while your baby is awake. This strengthens the neck and upper body muscles in case your baby rolls over during sleep.

Recommended toys:

- Floor activity centers
- Activity quilts
- Squeaky toys
- Soft dolls or stuffed animals without button noses and eyes

Toys to avoid:

- Recalled toys
- Latex balloons
- Small, rounded or oval objects (like balls and marbles)
- Hard toys attached to car seat handles
- Toys with strings or cords
- Toys with lead or magnets

Tips:

- Use stationary activity centers, instead of baby walkers. This keeps your baby in a safe location.
- Always strap your baby when using swings or bouncy chairs.
- Before shopping for toys, consider your baby's age, interest and skill level.
- Read age and safety labels. Toys that are labeled for children 3 years and older should be kept away from children under age 3.
- Complete and mail toy warranty card in case of a recall.
- Check old and new toys regularly for damage that may cause small pieces to break off.

Young children have small airways. Take an empty toilet paper roll and put the small object in it. If it fits completely into the roll, don't let children under 3 play with it. The reason you use a toilet paper roll is because it's close in size to a young child's fully expanded throat.

Babies explore with their hands, mouths and eyes, and enjoy toys they can touch or squeeze.

Feeding your baby

Don't hold your baby while cooking or carrying hot foods and liquids. Most scald burns in young children, especially in ages six months to 2 years, are from hot foods and liquids spilled in the kitchen or wherever food is prepared and served.

- Heat bottles with warm water, instead of in the microwave. Drinks heated in a microwave may be much hotter than their containers. Test them before feeding your baby. You can hold the bottle under a running faucet or place it inside a bowl of warm water, if desired.
- When using a high chair, make sure your baby is sitting down and is strapped in.
- Offer cooked and softer foods when it's age-appropriate. Make sure that everything is cut into tiny pieces, mashed or pureed.
- Learn infant CPR and the Heimlich maneuver for choking.
- Never let your child eat unattended.
- Have your child eat meals and snacks sitting down in plain view. No playing and eating.

Choking prevention

Infant choking is scary, but also largely preventable. Choking is a common cause of injury and death in young children, primarily because their small airways are easily obstructed. It takes time for babies to master the ability to chew and swallow food, and babies might

not be able to cough forcefully enough to dislodge an airway obstruction. As babies explore their environments, they also commonly put objects into their mouths — which can easily lead to infant choking. Food is the most common cause of infant choking. However, small objects — batteries from remote controls, parts from toys, coins and certain types of behavior during eating, such as eating while distracted — also can cause infant choking.

Below is a list of common foods that are easy for babies under 12 months to choke on and should be avoided:

- Whole nuts and seeds
- Fruit chunks
- Chunks of meat or cheese
- Raw fruit and vegetables
- Popcorn
- Whole grapes and dried fruit pieces, including raisins
- Hot dogs
- Chunks of peanut butter
- Hard or sticky candy, including chewing gum
- Honey

When your baby graduates to finger foods, keep them pea-sized and soft, or at least very easily gummed, such as o-shaped cereal. And a special reminder about honey: it contains botulism toxins, which can make young children gravely sick. Hold off until at least after age 1, when their bodies have matured enough to fight it off.

Ages 1-4

Choking prevention at this age is all about the prep work. You can offer your toddler or preschooler many of the foods listed on the previous page — as long as they are safely prepared. A few tips:

- Cut fruit and cooked vegetables into small pieces. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends giving kids pieces no wider than a dime.
- Cut round fruits, such as grapes or cherries, into quarters; peanuts should be halved, larger nuts chopped down to size.
- Slice hot dogs and raw vegetables lengthwise into sticks (julienne style) instead of round chunks.
- Spread peanut butter thinly across crackers or bread.
- As for popcorn, hard candy and gum, the AAP advises against them until age 4.

How to handle a choking infant: Responsive and unresponsive

1. Confirm that airway is completely obstructed. Do not sweep your finger in her mouth – this can cause the object to become lodged further in. Check for serious breathing difficulty, ineffective cough, absence of a strong cry, color change and/or look of distress. If your baby can cough and make sounds, no action is necessary. Stand by and observe in case further action is needed.
2. **Give 5 back slaps and 5 chest thrusts.** Hold her face down on your forearm. Support her head and jaw with your hand. Her head must be low so that gravity can assist. Support her body on your thigh. Give 5 back slaps between the shoulder blades with the heel of your other hand. If the object does not come out, turn her onto her back, supporting her head. Give 5 chest thrusts, using 2 fingers of your other hand to push on her chest in the center slightly below the nipple line. Push down about 1 1/2 inches. Alternate between 5 back slaps and 5 chest thrusts. If an object is dislodged and removed, she should be seen by a physician.
3. Repeat step 2 until your baby can breathe, cough or cry. If she becomes unresponsive, begin CPR.

If child becomes unresponsive:

4. If a second person is available, have him or her **call 911** and ask for EMS responders. If you are alone, call 911, put your phone on speaker and continue with CPR.
5. Begin CPR starting with compressions. Each time airway is opened for breaths, look for the object. (Refer to section below)
6. Do 5 cycles (2 minutes of CPR). If you are alone and EMS has not been called, call 911 and then continue CPR, attempting to give two breaths after each set of 30 compressions.

Infant CPR: The CAB approach Compression • Airway • Breathing



1. Check for consciousness (no more than 10 seconds)

Obtain consent from guardian if present. If not present, assume consent.

Gently flick or tap pads of feet.

If baby is not breathing or is only gasping, **perform CPR.**



2. Get in position

Position infant on back on a flat hard surface. Remove clothes that are in the way.

Place two fingers of one hand in the center of chest just below the nipple line.



C. Compressions: continue 30 pumps to 2 breaths until help arrives.

Press straight down at least 1/3 (1 1/2 inches of chest depth).

Let the chest retract all the way back up.

Compress 30 times at a rate of at least 100-120 times a minute and follow with two breaths until help arrives. Let the chest come back to its normal position after each compression. Count out loud so that you keep track. Just remember to push hard and push fast.



A. Airway

Tilt head back a little and lift chin to open airway.

Place one palm on forehead and apply firm pressure.

Place fingers of other hand under chin and gently lift (be

careful not to close the mouth completely or press on the throat). Each time you open the airway, look for the object. If you think you can get it out, reach gently for it. If not, continue with steps below.



B. Breathing

Cover infant’s mouth and nose with your mouth.

Hold forehead.

Gently blow until you see infant’s chest rise.

Let the air escape (the chest

will go back down).

Give one more breath.

If no air goes in when you blow, adjust infant’s head and try again, if that doesn’t work, then continue with chest compressions. Repeat steps until child starts breathing independently or help arrives.

Injury prevention and developmental stages

We all hope to never be in the position of having to save a child’s life, but emergencies can happen — even when you’re vigilant. Children test their physical limits and get caught in all kinds of dangerous situations. They eat and drink things they aren’t supposed to, grab for objects that can hurt them and walk or fall into furniture unsupervised.

The following chart offers injury prevention strategies by age/developmental stage. Remember, each child is different and may need different kinds of strategies. The following are suggestions.

Developmental stage/age	Injury prevention strategy
Infants (birth to 12 months)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay “hands on” (<i>always keep a hand on an infant laying on a surface above the floor or ground</i>) • Keep water temperatures less than 120 degrees Fahrenheit • Check batteries of smoke alarms • Use “back to sleep” practices (<i>place infants on their backs when putting them down to sleep</i>) in their own crib with no extra pillows or blankets • Keep small objects out of reach • Use properly installed car seat • Use swings, bouncers and saucers while supervised instead of walkers • Check food temperatures
Toddler (1 to 2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use gates to protect stairwells • Lock unsupervised doors • Protect cooking equipment, electrical cords and household products • Provide stable furniture with soft corners (<i>for kids who are pulling to stand, cruising and taking first steps</i>) • Select food options that prevent choking rather than small or hard items (<i>e.g., peanuts, grapes, raisins, etc.</i>) • Offer toys without small parts • Ensure no small or sharp objects are within reach • Use fall-safe floor surfaces (<i>any surface that can absorb the impact of the fall</i>) • Use appropriate, properly installed car seat • Check water temperatures before putting child in bath
Preschoolers (3 to 5 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check and maintain playground equipment to ensure it’s safe, age- and weight-appropriate • Use fall-safe floor and ground surfaces (<i>any surface that can absorb the impact of the fall</i>) • Select safe clothing

Adapted from: Zamani, A.R. (ED). *Health and Safety in Child Care Settings: Prevention of Injury. A Curriculum for the Training for Child Care Providers. Module 2. 2nd Ed. Berkeley, CA: The California Child Care Health Program.*

Keeping children safe from poisons

If you think someone may have touched or tasted a possible poison or medicine, immediately call the Virginia Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222

While harm from poisoning is a concern for people of all ages, children in the toddler and preschool age groups are the most likely to be poisoned. Children at this age are curious and quick, and they explore everything in their world without fear often by tasting. They like to imitate what they see grown-ups doing, such as getting things out of high cabinets, using spray cleaners and taking medicines. Poisoning is one of the most common — and most preventable — injuries of childhood.

What is a poison?

Poisons are chemical substances that can cause harm if used in the wrong way, or by the wrong person. Some poisons may cause harm if they get into your eyes, or if you breathe them. Others are dangerous if they are swallowed or spilled onto skin. Children are poisoned at home in almost 90 percent of poison cases. There are hundreds of poisons in nearly every home. Some examples of poisons include:

- Bug sprays
- Carbon monoxide (gas)
- Cleaning products
- Cosmetics
- Gasoline and lighter fluids
- Medicines
- Mothballs
- Plants and mushrooms
- Spiders and snakes
- Laundry detergents and bleach (especially laundry pods)

To keep children safe from poison chemicals and medicines in the home:

- Store all chemicals and medicines separately and safely. These should be kept out of sight in a locked cabinet. Just putting poisons and medicines “up high” is not safe enough, since many children older than about 18 months can climb to reach them.
- Don’t leave a container out for “just a minute.” Many poisonings happen when an adult using a product is interrupted or distracted, such as leaving it to go answer the phone or doorbell.
- Choose products in containers that are hard for children to open. Replace the cap tightly after using a product, but remember that no container can promise to always keep children out. Child resistant caps just aren’t truly “child proof.”
- Take your medicines where children cannot see you.
- Have a working carbon monoxide alarm in your home.
- Always store bleach or bleach products in their original containers with labels. Never mix chlorine bleach or other products containing chlorine bleach with ammonia, ammonia-based products, acidic products (such as toilet bowl cleaners and vinegar). Mixing them can be very dangerous and even deadly.
- There have been increasing cases of babies and toddlers ingesting laundry pods. Accidental ingestions by young children can be very dangerous. Keep pods out of reach of children and pets. Never let young children handle laundry pods. Do not squeeze the packaging as it may burst into the eyes and face.
- Be extra careful with products that look or smell like candy or drinks, because they may attract children. Examples are window cleaners that look like blue drinks, lamp oils that look like apple juice, pills and laundry detergent pods that resemble candy. Even adults can be fooled by “look-alike” products.
- Discuss precautions with grandparents and caregivers. Their homes might not be as child-safe as yours.

Know what to do in case of a poisoning. If you think someone may have touched or tasted a possible poison or medicine, don’t guess...be sure. Call the **Virginia Poison Center** right away at **1-800-222-1222**. Don’t waste precious time on old-fashioned treatments like milk or sticking fingers into the throat, and don’t wait to see if sickness occurs — some poisons can cause harm that can’t be seen for hours.



Sleep safety

Everything you need to know to keep your kids safe while sleeping.

There is nothing more beautiful than a sleeping baby, especially for parents who are often overtired themselves. By following a few simple tips, you can create a safer sleeping environment for your baby.

Make sure your crib is up-to-date

- Check that your crib meets safety standards of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association (JPMA), and make sure it has all the right pieces.
- If you can fit a can of soda between the slats of a crib, that means a child's head, hand or foot could get stuck.
- Make sure the mattress fits snugly against the sides of the crib
- If the sides go down, don't use the crib.
- We know that stuffed animals, bumpers and all those cute accessories make a baby's crib seem warm and cozy. Unfortunately, they can often do more harm than good. A firm mattress covered with a tight-fitting crib sheet is all you need to make your baby sleep like a baby.

- Corner posts of the crib should not stick up more than one-sixteenth of an inch. It doesn't seem like much, but anything more can be risky.
- Check to make sure there are no design cutouts in the headboard or footboard.
- If your crib doesn't meet CPSC standards, don't use it.
- If you are getting a used crib, check to see if it has been recalled at www.recalls.gov.

Help your baby sleep safely

- Lay your baby on his back to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- If you're worried about keeping your baby warm on those cold winter nights, try using a sleepsack (wearable blanket). They're pretty cozy. House temperatures should be between 70-72 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Babies should not sleep on beds, sofas, recliners, chairs, soft surfaces, bouncy chairs or baby swings. If this happens, make sure to return your baby to a safe sleep environment.
- New parents have a million things to do, but learning CPR should be on the top of the list. It will give you tremendous peace of mind — and the more peace of mind you have as a parent, the better.

Look at the world through your baby's eyes — get down on your hands and knees and see what looks interesting and what can be reached.

- Unintentional suffocation is the leading cause of injury-related death among children under 1 year of age. Nearly three-quarters of suffocation deaths among infants are from accidental suffocation or strangulation in bed. Co-sleeping with infants is not recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Position your child's crib or bed in the right place

- Avoid placing a crib, bed, high chair or playpen near windows, draperies, blinds or wall-mounted decorative accessories with cords.
- Do not hang anything on or above a baby's crib on a string or cord.
- Room-sharing is a safer option than having your baby sleep in bed with you. Place your baby's crib, play yard or bassinet in your room for more convenient feeding and close contact. The AAP recommends your baby's crib be in your room for at least the first six months, but ideally for the first year of life, to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- Remember to always return your baby to his or her own crib when you're ready to go back to sleep. This is tough sometimes because parents are often more tired than the babies, but it is much safer.
- If your child has a bunk bed, check the guard rails on the top bunk. Make sure that there isn't enough space between the guardrail and bed frame or the head and footboards that a leg or arm could get trapped.

Home safety

Everything you need to know to keep your kids safe in your home.

Every parent wants their children to grow up healthy and strong in the place where they deserve to feel safest — at home. The good news is that there are simple and easy steps that families can take to protect their children.

Fall prevention

- Use approved safety gates at the tops and bottoms of stairs and attach them to the wall. Remember to read the manufacturer's instructions to make sure you have the right gate for your needs. Not all gates are safe for use at the top of stairs.
- Keep babies and young kids strapped in when using high chairs, swings or strollers. When placing your baby into a carrier, remember to place the carrier on the floor, not on top of tables or other furniture.
- Properly install window guards and stops to prevent window falls. Windows above the first floor should have an emergency release device in case of fire.
- Supervise your baby at all times. Don't rely on an older sibling to take care of your baby.



Water safety

- Actively supervise children in and around water. Avoid distractions of any kind, such as reading or talking on the phone. Do not leave them unattended for ANY length of time.
- Once bath time is over, immediately drain the tub.
- Keep toilet lids closed and keep doors to bathrooms and laundry rooms closed to prevent drowning.
- Make sure home pools have four-sided fencing that's at least 4 feet high with self-closing, self-latching gates to prevent a child from wandering into the pool area unsupervised.
- Every child is different, so enroll children in swimming lessons when you feel they are ready. However, baby swim classes are no substitution for supervision. The AAP does not recommend swim lessons under the age of 4. Teach young children from an early age not to go near or in water without an adult. Older children should swim with a partner, every time.
- Avoid ingesting any alcohol if your children are in a body of water. If at a party, identify the adult who will be the designated monitor of your children.

Fire safety

- For the best protection, install smoke alarms on every level of your home, especially near sleeping areas. Test batteries every month. Batteries should be changed every six months unless the alarm has a 10 year battery.
- Create and practice a home fire escape plan with two ways out of every room. In the event of a fire, leave your home immediately. Once you're out of the house, stay out.
- Keep anything that can catch fire, such as dish towels or wooden spoons, away from your stovetop. Have a fire extinguisher in the kitchen in case of emergency, and make sure you know how it works.
- Blow candles out when you leave the room or before you go to sleep.

Burn prevention

- Don't carry a child while cooking on the stove. It's better to put your child in a high chair where you can still see them. Consider the safety devices sold for stove knobs. Turn pot handles inside and use back burners first if possible.
- Keep an eye on appliances such as irons, curling irons or hair dryers that can heat up quickly or stay warm. Unplug and safely store these items after use.



- Keep appliance cords out of children’s reach, especially if the appliances produce a lot of heat.

Scalds prevention

- To prevent accidental scalding, set your water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or the manufacturer’s recommended setting. Check the water with your wrist or elbow before giving your baby a bath.
- To prevent hot food or liquid spills, use the back burner of your stove and turn pot handles away from the edge. Keep hot foods and liquids away from the edge of your counters and tables.
- If stove knobs are on the front, consider safety caps that prevent easy turn on by small children.

Carbon monoxide safety

- Make sure your home has a carbon monoxide alarm. For the best protection, install a carbon monoxide alarm on every level of your home, especially near sleeping areas.
- Don’t use a grill, generator or camping stove inside your home, garage or near a window. Don’t use your oven or stovetop to heat your home.
- If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting. Don’t leave a car, SUV or motorcycle engine running inside a garage, even if the doors are open.

Medication safety

- Put all medicine and vitamins up and away and out of

sight after every use.

- Use the dosing device that comes with the medicine, not a kitchen spoon. Kitchen spoons aren’t all the same, and a teaspoon or tablespoon used for cooking won’t measure the same amount as the dosing device.
- Never give a toddler (greater than one year of age) infant medication. Infant medication is more concentrated and could lead to an overdose.

TV and furniture tip-overs prevention

- Mount flat-panel TVs to the wall to prevent them from falling off stands. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions to ensure that you have a secure fit.
- Use brackets, braces or wall straps to secure unstable or top-heavy furniture to the wall.
- If you have a large, box-style cathode ray tube (CRT) TV, place it on a low, stable piece of furniture. If you no longer use your CRT TV, consider recycling it. To find a recycle location, go to GreenerGadgets.org.

Bath time safety

- Get everything you’ll need beforehand to make this time safer and easier for both of you.
- Have a safe water temperature. Your baby’s skin can burn faster than an adult’s because it’s thinner and more sensitive.
- Set the temperature at your water heater at 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Put anti-scald devices on faucets. These devices turn off the water if the temperature is too hot.
- Seat your baby facing away from the faucet so he or she won’t try to turn it on.
- Test the bathwater with your wrist or elbow before bathing your baby.
- Never leave your baby alone. Babies can drown in as little as 1 inch of water. They can drown in bathtubs, 5-gallon buckets and toilets. The main problem is lack of supervision — usually for a short period of time.
- Don’t leave your baby unattended in the tub or near sinks, buckets and containers filled with water. Babies can slip out of bath seats, fall out of baby tubs or tip forward or sideways into the water and drown in seconds!
- Always keep one hand on your baby. This also applies to older babies who can sit up by themselves.
- Don’t let older siblings bathe your baby.



Car seat safety

Everything you need to know to keep your kids safe in cars.

Engineers are working hard to ensure that cars and car seats are designed to keep kids as safe as possible. But it's up to every parent to take full advantage of these innovations by making sure car seats and booster seats are used and installed correctly. Here's what you need to know to ensure that your most precious cargo is safe in cars.

Choose the right direction: Rear- or forward-facing

For the best protection, keep your baby in a rear-facing car seat for as long as possible — but at least until 2 years old. You can find the exact height and weight limit on the side or back of your car seat. Kids who ride in rear-facing seats have the best protection for the head, neck and spine. It is especially important for rear-facing children to ride in a back seat away from the airbag.

When your children outgrow a rear-facing seat, usually around age 2, move them to a forward-facing car seat. Keep the seat in the back and make sure to attach the

top tether after you tighten and lock the seat belt or lower anchors (LATCH). Use the top tether until your car seat labels tell you not to. Check both your child restraint and vehicle manuals to see if there is a weight limit for the LATCH system. If they both agree to a higher weight, it is fine to follow those directions.

Kids can remain in some forward-facing car seats until they're 65 pounds or more, depending on the car seat limits. Check labels to find the exact measurements for your seat. Discontinue use of lower attachment when your child reaches the limits set by your car seat and car manufacturers. Continue to use the top tether. You must read both manuals to know about those limits. Not to worry: Once your child meets the lower anchor weight limits, you will switch to a seat belt. Seat belts are made to protect very heavy adults as well as children in car seats and booster seats.

Check car seat labels

Look at the label on your car seat to make sure it's appropriate for your child's age, weight and height.

Your car seat has an expiration date. Find and double check the label to make sure it's still safe. Discard a seat that is expired in a dark trash bag so that it

cannot be pulled from the trash and reused. If possible, have someone cut the frame prior to your throwing an expired car seat away to further prevent usage.

Know your car seat's history

Buy a used car seat only if you know its full crash history. That means you must buy it from someone you know, not from a thrift store or over the internet. Once a car seat has been in a crash, it needs to be replaced.

Road injuries are the leading cause of preventable deaths and injuries to children in the United States. Correctly used child safety seats can reduce the risk of death by as much as 71 percent.

Make sure your car seat is installed correctly

Inch test. Once your car seat is installed, give it a good tug at the base where the seat belt goes through it. Can you move it more than an inch side to side or front to back? A properly installed seat will not move more than an inch.

Pinch test. Make sure the harness is tightly buckled and coming from the correct slots (check your car seat manual). With the chest clip placed at armpit level, pinch the strap at your child's shoulder. If you are unable to pinch any excess webbing, you're good to go.

For both rear- and forward-facing child safety seats, use either the car's seat belt or the lower anchors and for forward-facing seats, use the top tether to lock the car seat in place. Don't use both the lower anchors and seat belt at the same time. They are equally safe — so pick the one that gives you the best fit.

If you are having even the slightest trouble, questions or concerns, certified child passenger safety technicians are able to help or even double check your work. Visit safekids.org to find a car seat inspection event near you.

Check your car seat

Studies indicate that 73 percent of car seats are not used or installed correctly, so before you hit the road, check your car seat.



Learn how to install your car seat for free. Safe Kids hosts car seat inspection events across the country where certified technicians can help make sure your car seat is properly installed. They also serve in fixed locations called inspection stations during specific days and times in some communities. You may find an inspection station with certified technicians at a GM dealership, a hospital or even a fire house. They will teach you so that you can always be sure your car seat is used correctly.

Register your car seat

Register your new or currently used car seat, ensuring that you are promptly notified about future recalls. You can register online with your car seat manufacturer, using the information found on the sticker on your car seat at safercar.gov. You can also register by filling out the registration card that came with your car seat. It's pre-populated with your car seat's information. Mail the card; no postage required.

Car Seats and Winter Coats

We know you want your little one to be warm, but please don't buckle your child into a car seat while wearing a bulky coat. The coat can compress in a crash and create a loose car seat harness, putting your child at greater risk of injury in the event of a crash. Instead, lay the jacket over your children like a blanket once they're safely secured.

Is it time for a booster seat?

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 or 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?

If the car seat with a harness still fits, and your child is within the weight and height limits, continue to use it until it is outgrown. It provides more protection than a booster seat or seat belt for a small child.

Be wary of toys

Toys can injure your child in a crash, so be extra careful to choose ones that are soft and will not hurt your child. Secure loose objects and toys to protect everyone in the car.

Buckle up

We know that when adults wear seat belts, kids wear seat belts. So be a good example and buckle up for every ride. Be sure everyone in the vehicle buckles up, too.

Buckling up the right way on every ride is the single most important thing a family can do to stay safe in the car.

Prevent heatstroke

Never leave your child alone in a car, not even for a minute. While it may be tempting to dash out for a quick errand your baby is sleeping in his car seat, the temperature inside your car can rise 20 degrees and cause heatstroke in the time it takes for you to run in and out of the store.

Leaving a child alone in a car is against the law in many states.

Car seat checklist

Top 5 things to do

- Right seat.** This is an easy one. Check the label on your car seat to make sure it’s appropriate for your child’s age, weight and height. Like milk, your car seat has an expiration date. Just double check the label on your car seat to make sure it is still safe.
- Right place.** Kids are VIPs, just ask them. We know all VIPs ride in the back seat, so keep all children in the back seat until they are 13.
- Right direction.** You want to keep your child in a rear-facing car seat for as long as possible, usually until around age 2. When she outgrows the seat, move your child to a forward-facing car seat. Make sure to attach the top tether after you tighten and lock the seat belt or lower anchors.
- Inch test.** Once your car seat is installed, give it a good shake at the base. Can you move it more than an inch side to side or front to back? A properly installed seat will not move more than an inch.
- Pinch test.** Make sure the harness is tightly buckled and coming from the correct slots (check car seat manual). Now, with the chest clip placed at armpit level, pinch the strap at your child’s shoulder. If you are unable to pinch any excess webbing, you’re good to go.

Please read the vehicle and car seat instruction manuals to help you with this checklist. If you are having even the slightest trouble, questions or concerns, don’t worry about a thing. Certified child passenger safety technicians are waiting to help or even double check your work.

Visit [safekids.org](https://www.safekids.org) to find a car seat inspection event in your community.

For more information about car seat safety, visit American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) website at [healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org).

