



Frequently asked questions

Can I use a second-hand car seat?

Do not use a second-hand car seat when:

- The history is unknown.
- It was in a crash.
- It was recalled.
- It is past the expiration date.
- The labels are missing.
- It has missing or broken parts.

Can I use a car seat after crash?

After any crash, contact the manufacturer of your car seat to find out if it is still safe to use. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration states that car seats do not need to be replaced if ALL of the following apply:

- The vehicle can be driven away from the crash site.
- The vehicle door closest to the car seat was not damaged.
- None of the people in the vehicle were hurt in the crash.
- The air bags did not go off during the crash.
- You do not see damage to the car seat.

How do I get rid of an unusable car seat?

- Check the owner's manual for directions.
- Cut the buckle and harness straps out of the seat.

- Take the fabric cover off of the shell.
- Write on the plastic shell, "Do not use."
- Put it in the trash.

Can I let my baby sleep in the car seat?

Babies who are left in their car seat to sleep could be injured or die. Car seats should only be used for driving places.

Tips to keep your baby safe:

- Make sure your baby is secured in their seat correctly,
- Check the seat to make sure it is at the correct recline angle.
- For long trips, stop often to take a break.
- As soon as you arrive, remove your baby from the car seat. Lay your baby on a firm sleeping surface.

Should I worry about my baby being too hot in the car?

Young children have a hard time regulating their body temperature. Their bodies heat up much faster than adults'. Dressing a baby too warmly can cause them to overheat.

Tips to keep your baby safe:

- Dress babies in thin layers.
- Put blankets over the top of the car seat harness to protect them from the cold.
- Never put extra layers under the child.

Can I use non-regulated products with my car seat?

A non-regulated product is an item that does not come with the car seat when you buy it. These items can affect the safety of your car seat. Check the owner's manual of your car seat to see if they can be used.

How long does my child need to ride in a rear-facing car seat?

Safest recommendation: Keep your child in a rear-facing seat with harness as long as they are within the weight and height requirements for the car seat. Convertible car seats allow children to stay rear facing to 2 years of age or older.

Wisconsin law: Children must ride in a rear-facing car seat until they are 1 year old and weigh 20 pounds.

How long does my child need to ride in a forward-facing car seat?

Safest recommendation: Keep your child in a forward-facing car seat with a harness as long as they are within the age, weight and height requirements for the car seat.

Wisconsin law: Children must ride in a forward-facing car seat with a harness until they are 4 years old and weigh 40 pounds.

How long does my child need to ride in a booster seat?

Safest recommendation: A child should keep using a booster seat until they are at least 4 ft. 9 inches tall or meet ALL of the following:

- The child must be able to sit all the way back against the vehicle seat.
- The child's knees should be able to bend comfortably at the edge of the vehicle seat.
- The seat belt must cross the shoulder between the neck and arm.
- The lap belt must sit low, across the child's thighs.
- The child must be able to sit like this the whole trip.

It will be much better for the child to wait until they can easily do all of the above.

Wisconsin law: Children must ride in a booster seat until they are 8 years old or weigh 80 pounds or are 4 feet 9 inches tall.

When can my child sit in the front seat?

Safest recommendation: It is always safer for kids to ride in the back. Kids should not ride in the front seat until they are at least 13 years old.

Wisconsin law: Children riding in a rear-facing or forward-facing harnessed car seat must be in the back seat, if there is a back seat.

If a vehicle does not have a back seat, can I put a car seat in the front seat?

Safest option: Use a different vehicle with a back seat to transport the child. Make sure the child is in the right car seat for their age, weight and height.

Wisconsin law: Children riding in a rear-facing or forward-facing harnessed car seat must be in the back seat, if there is a back seat.

- It is not safe to put a rear-facing car seat in the front seat, in front of an air bag.

- If a forward-facing child must ride in the front seat, the vehicle seat should be moved as far back from the dashboard as possible. Be sure to turn off the air bag.

safekidswi.org
carseatwi@childrenswi.org
Car seat hotline: (855) 224-3692

