



Infant-only car seats *must* always face the rear of the vehicle. They are for babies from birth to 10 kg (22 lb.). They have an upper height limit up to 76 cm (30 in.). Some new models go to 13.6, 14.5 or 16 kg & 81 cm (30, 32 or 35 lb. & 32 in.).

Infants 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 baby'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

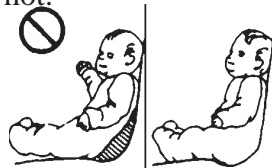
☺ putting the seat in your vehicle correctly

**It is important that you always follow the instructions for your seat.**

### ***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.



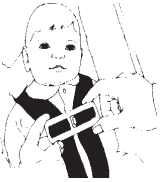
The harness straps should come through the back of the infant seat at the level of, or slightly below, the baby's shoulders; never from above. The harness must be adjusted as the child grows, both for safety and comfort.

The harness straps must lie flat on the infant's body. Any twists or wrinkles 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.



Infant seats come with a chest clip to prevent the harness straps from slipping off the shoulders. It should be at the baby's armpit level (at least 8 cm [3 in.] below a newborn's chin). Check *your seat's* instructions to make sure that you have it threaded correctly.



You can use a rolled diaper or small towel on either side of the baby's head and torso for support. Oversized clothing, bunting 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 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***

The rear seat is a safer place for a child. The centre, rear position is preferred because it is furthest away from the point-of-impact from any direction.



Ideally, 80% of the base of the infant seat should be firmly supported by the vehicle seat.

A rear-facing car seat must **not** be installed in a seating position that has an active **air bag**.

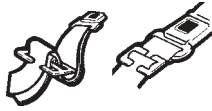
Check *your seat's* instructions to be sure that you have it reclined properly. A tightly rolled towel or a foam noodle may be placed under the infant seat to regain the correct angle.

Make sure that the infant seat is not reclined too steeply. The baby could slide upward, with force, into the harness straps and be injured, or could completely slide out of the seat.



Reclined too much

Check your vehicle owner's manual for information on using your seat belts or Universal Anchorage System (UAS) to secure an infant seat. Some lap & shoulder belts, usually on older vehicles, need a locking clip to prevent them from loosening.



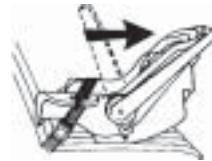
It is important that you put the vehicle seat belt or UAS through the proper path. Follow *your* seat's instructions.

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 seat should not move more than 2.5 cm (1 in.) toward the front of the vehicle, or directly side-to-side at the belt path. It is acceptable (and normal) to be able to lift 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 restraint is properly attached to the base. Most models can be used with, or without, the base.

Usually, the carry handle on your infant seat must be down when the seat is used in a vehicle. Check *your* seat's instructions.



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 infants remain rear-facing until age 2 **or** until they reach the car seat's maximum rear-facing weight 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 to 13.6 to 20 kg (30 to 45 lb.), depending on the model.

At a bare minimum, a child should be 1 year old, able to walk unassisted, **AND** weigh at least 10 kg (22 lb.) before being turned forward.

For more information, go to our website: [www.infantandtoddlersafety.ca](http://www.infantandtoddlersafety.ca)

Copyright ITSA, revised February 2012

## Infant & Toddler Safety Association

# Infant



# Car Seats



(519)570-0181

(888)570-0181



23-500 Fairway Road South, Suite 154, Kitchener ON N2C 1X3