

## Car Safety

### Child Car Seats

Your child must be in a car seat every time they travel in a car, no matter how short the trip.

Ensure your car seat has:

- a CMVSS label
- at least 2 sets of slots for shoulder harness straps and 2 sets for crotch straps



### Child seat or booster seat?

**Stage 1: Rear-facing child seat** (“infant seat”) – Use from birth until your child is at least 1 year old **and** weighs at least 9 kg (20 lb).

**Stage 2: Forward-facing child seat** – Use until your child weighs at least 18 kg (40 lb).

**Stage 3: Booster seat** – Use until your child is 9 years old or 145 cm (4 feet 9 inches) tall.

### Rear-facing or front-facing?

A rear-facing infant seat is safest for your toddler, and **must be used until they are at least 1 year old and weighs at least 9 kg (20 lb)**. Continue to keep your child facing the back of the car even if they have to fold their legs a bit, until they reach the rear-facing weight or height limit of the seat. At that point, it’s time to either find another model that they can use rear-facing, or switch your current seat to face the front of the car. By starting with a convertible seat, you can continue to use the same seat, adjusting it from rear-facing to forward-facing as your child grows.

### New or used?

Second-hand seats aren’t recommended. If you do use a used seat, inspect it carefully, check for recalls and visit Health Canada’s second-hand car seat safety page at [canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/road-safety/second-hand-car-seats.html](http://canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/road-safety/second-hand-car-seats.html). Don’t use a seat that’s been in a crash. Always check expiry dates on used car seats.

### 3-point or 5-point harness?

If possible, use a 50-point harness, which is more secure and holds your child at their shoulders and hips.

### DANGER

If an airbag inflates and hits your child’s seat, they could be seriously hurt or killed.

- Never place a rear-facing car seat where there’s an airbag.
- If you have to put your toddler in the front seat, turn off the airbag and put the seat as far back as it will go.
- Keep your toddler’s seat away from side airbags.



### HOW TO Install a rear-facing car seat

1. Place it facing the back window in the back seat following the manufacturer’s instructions.
2. Tilt it back a maximum of 45°. If your child’s head falls forward, the seat needs to be tilted back more.
3. Secure the seat with its universal anchorage system or with the car’s seat belt. Check your car’s owner’s manual to see if you need to use a locking clip.



### HOW TO Put your child in the car seat

1. Fasten the harness snugly so that only 1 finger fits between it and your child’s collarbone.
2. Raise the chest clip to your child’s underarms.
3. Ensure the harness straps are at their shoulders or slightly below. Raise the harness straps when their shoulders are level with the next highest slot.
4. Dress them in clothes that have sleeves and legs and aren’t too heavy.
5. If they need a blanket, put it on after they’re strapped in.

## General Car Safety



### DID YOU KNOW?

The safest place for your child in the car is the centre position of the back seat.

- ✓ Hold hands in the street and in parking lots.
- ✓ Use the appropriate car seat for your child, and wear your seat belt.
- ✓ Pull over and stop if you need to focus on your toddler.
- ✓ Remove any loose objects that can fly around and small objects that can roll under the brake pedal.
- ✓ Put pets in carriers or behind screens.
- ✓ Lock power windows.
- ✓ Before raising or lowering windows, check that your toddler's fingers, head and arms are inside.
- ✓ Put your phone or purse in the back seat to help ensure you don't forget to take your child with you, or use some other strategy so you do not forget your child.
- ✗ Never leave your toddler alone in a car, even for a few minutes. Your child can quickly get too hot if left in a parked car, and this can cause serious injury or even death.
- ✗ Never leave your child alone when they're sleeping in a car seat. Their head can fall forward, making it hard to breathe. Once you reach your destination, move them out of the seat and onto a safe sleep surface.
- ✗ Don't place your child in their car seat on a counter, on the car or on any raised surface.
- ✗ Don't drive while texting or talking on your phone.

