

## Don'ts

- » Babies/children should never ride in a front seat where there is a passenger side airbag.
- » Avoid using blankets, heavy snowsuits or a bunting under the harness straps. These make it impossible to get the harness straps tight enough to hold the baby in a crash.
- » Don't remove your baby from the car seat in a moving vehicle. Pull off the road and stop the car first.
- » Avoid using vehicles that have no back seats.
- » If your child is using a car bed because they did not tolerate the upright angle of an infant carrier, there are other things you must consider. You should not use an infant swing, an infant chair, an upright stroller, or leave the baby in an upright position when unattended.
- » Minimize travel when possible. It is best to have someone ride in the back seat with the infant.
- » Never leave the infant unattended in a vehicle.



## As your baby grows

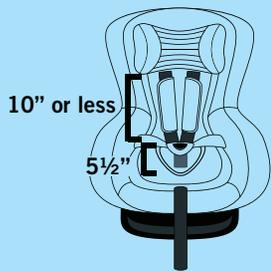
- » Keep the harness straps in the slots at or below the shoulders while they are rear facing.
- » If your baby rides in an infant-only car seat, move the baby into a larger car seat, generally rear-facing, before the baby's head gets to the top of the car seat shell. It should be no closer than 1" from the top of the seat.
- » Your baby should always ride rear-facing in the back seat until age two or when they have reached the upper units of their car seat (usually 30-35 or 40 pound)

Car seat  
positioning  
for  
premature  
or  
small  
newborns



 **Altru**<sup>®</sup>  
HEALTH SYSTEM

When your baby is ready to go home from Altru Health System, you will need to be prepared to take the baby home in an approved car seat. The car seat you choose is especially important if your baby weighs less than 7 pounds.



Infant safety seat showing maximum recommended harness dimensions for correct fit on a very small baby. Even with a small harness, a baby may need padding beside their body at first.

PICTURE A

The “best” seat for your baby is one that fits your baby and fits into your vehicle, and one that you will find easy to use correctly every time.

A car seat given to you as a gift may not be the best fit for your baby. You may want to exchange it for one that fits your baby’s needs and your vehicle more appropriately.

## Choosing a car seat to fit your premature or small baby

- » Car seats with a space of 5 1/2 inches or less between the crotch strap and the seat back will keep your baby from slouching too much (Picture A).
- » Seat harnesses with shoulder strap slots located 10 inches or less above the seat bottom will work best to hold your baby in place in a crash (Picture A).
- » The lowest harness strap slots need to be at or below shoulder level. If there’s room for the baby to move, there’s room for the baby to get hurt.
- » It is recommended that seats not be used if they are over 6 years old or as per the manufacturer’s recommendations.
- » If the seat has been in a crash, it may not be safe to use. Please talk to the baby’s nurse about this.
- » Read your vehicle owner’s manual regarding car seats and their usage in your particular make and model vehicle.
- » Once a car seat is obtained, read the car seat manufacturer’s instruction manual. Over 90% of car seats are misused and much of the misuse can be prevented if the parents read the instructions and are familiar with their car seat’s use.

## Infant placement in car seat

- » Dress your baby in clothes with legs so the crotch strap can go between the baby’s legs.
- » Do not buy an additional infant head support. Extra padding can make the harness too loose in a crash, allowing the baby to be thrown out. It is best to purchase and use receiving

- blankets that are rolled up around the baby but not put behind the body. (Picture B)
- » The baby’s back and bottom should be flat against the back of the car seat.
- » Shoulder straps must be at or below the level of the shoulders. If they are above the shoulder level, the seat and harness system is too large for the baby as it does not provide a proper fit.
- » Position the harness retainer clip at armpit level and NOT under the chin. This places it across the hard chest bone rather than at their neck or soft tummy tissue. It also holds the straps together so the baby won’t fly out of the seat in a crash.
- » Rolled up receiving blankets alongside the baby’s body and between the baby’s legs behind the crotch strap can make the car seat fit better (Picture B).
- » Buckle your baby in the rear-facing position in the back seat and secure the seat belt so the seat does not move more than 1” side-to-side.
- » Make sure the car seat is at the correct angle when placed in the vehicle. There will be level indicator of some type (bubble, line, arrow) on the side of the seat or the base. The correct angle keeps the baby’s head from flopping forward. There may be a part on the base that adjusts to help get the correct angle. If there isn’t, a rolled towel or blanket can be used under the base to help achieve the correct angle.

## Securing a monitor or other medical equipment

Equipment, such as monitors or oxygen tanks should be wedged under the vehicle seat or on the floor to prevent it from becoming a dangerous projectile in the event of a crash.

If using monitoring equipment during travel time, it should have portable and self-contained power available for twice the duration of the expected travel time.

Consider having someone ride in the back seat with the baby to respond readily to alarms from the equipment.

Every baby deserves to be protected in case of a car crash.



PICTURE B