

SINAI HEALTH LINK

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HEALTH LINK

1-888-AT-SINAI (1-888-287-4624)

KEEP KIDS SAFE ON THE ROAD

It's hard for kids to sit still in a car. But keeping your most precious cargo buckled in when you drive can save their lives.

"Car accidents kill more grade-school age children than any disease, or any other kind of accident," says Nirmla Verma, MD, a children's doctor at Mount Sinai Hospital in Chicago. "But using a safety seat the right way cuts the chances your child will be hurt or killed in an accident by more than 80 percent."

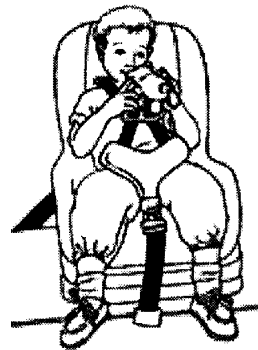
Keeping your kids safe in the car starts with putting them in the back seat. Children should never ride in the front. And they should never ride on someone's lap.

When it comes to picking a safety seat, one size does not fit all. There are three different kinds, and the one you use depends upon how big your child is.

- Infant-only and convertible seats are best for babies under 20 pounds.



The seat faces backward, and is held in place by the car's seat belt. A separate harness strap holds the baby in the seat.



- Children who weigh 20 to 40 pounds – usually 1 to 3 years old – need a convertible seat. It faces forward and is held in place by two straps. One holds the bottom of the seat in place. The other, attached to the top, keeps the seat and the child from flying forward in a sudden stop. A separate harness strap keeps the child in the seat.

- Booster seats are for kids who are too big for a convertible seat. These children – between 40 and 80 pounds – may be as old as 8. But they still need a safety seat because they can slide under the car's seat belt in a crash. A safety seat lifts them so the seat belt can do its job.



Children who weigh more than 80 pounds usually don't need a safety seat. If they're tall enough to sit with their knees bent at the edge of the car seat and the seat belt fits low over their hips, they're ready.

For children who have disabilities, special seats may be needed.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT CAR SEAT FOR YOUR CHILD AND IT WILL BE A SAFER RIDE FOR EVERYONE.

Did You Know?

- ◆ Four out of five safety seats are used the wrong way.
- ◆ All safety seats don't fit all cars or vans.
- ◆ Cheaper safety seats are as good as the fancy ones – as long as you use them right.
- ◆ You could get a \$50 ticket in Illinois if a child isn't in a proper seat.

Ask Your Sinai Doctor

Q. *How old should a child be before it's safe to ride in a shopping-cart seat?*

A. Never put a child in a shopping cart. Thousands of kids are hurt every year in falls from carts. Even the infant seats that lock into the cart are unsafe. The child's weight can make the cart top-heavy and more likely to tip over. When you're out, carry your baby in a backpack or front pack, or use a stroller.

SECOND-HAND DANGER



It may be cheaper to buy or borrow a safety seat someone else used, but it may not be safe. Even a seat you used with your other children could be dangerous.

Don't use a second-hand seat if:

- ◆ It has been in an accident.
- ◆ It is more than 10 years old. Today, seats are safer and won't have worn-out parts.
- ◆ There are cracks in the plastic.
- ◆ The frame is bent or rusted.
- ◆ Parts are missing.
- ◆ The liner is torn or pulls away from the plastic seat.
- ◆ The straps are frayed, torn or missing.
- ◆ The original instructions are missing.
- ◆ It doesn't have a label showing the model number and the date it was made. You need to know them to find out if the seat has been recalled.

TOO TIGHT? TOO LOOSE? MAKE IT FIT JUST RIGHT

Your child has to be strapped securely into a safety seat for it to work. But how tight is right?

Here's a good tip:

Slip your finger between the harness and the child's collar bone. If you can't do it easily, the harness is too tight. If it's no problem at all, it may be too loose. If the fit is snug but comfortable, it's just right.



For information on Sinai health and community services, call 1-888-AT-SINAI (1-888-287-4624); TTY (773) 257-6289.
