

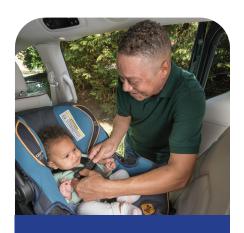
## PREMATURE and SMALL BABIES:

Car Seat Tips for Discharge and the First Few Car Rides

## Before baby leaves the hospital:

- Buy a car seat that is labeled to fit a tiny baby (3 or 4 pounds starting weight). These seats have features to make the seat safer for small babies.
- Read the car seat manual or watch an online video from your car seat's company to learn to adjust the harness and buckle strap to fit your baby.
- Check your car seat use through an online or in-person appointment with a Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST). Important things to check include: how tight it is installed in the car, and is the seat reclined properly for a newborn.
- **Bring** your car seat into the hospital. Leave your infant car seat base installed in the car.
- Read the manual about any pads or inserts that come
  with your seat and how to use them. Don't add anything
  that wasn't sold with your seat.
- Be aware: A day or so before discharge, a nurse may perform the "Car Seat Tolerance Screen" to monitor your baby in the car seat in case there are breathing or heart problems when riding semi-upright in the car.

Turn over for more car seat tips for your growing baby.



Find a Child
Passenger Safety
Technician to
help you with
your car seat:

Maryland Kids in Safety Seats www.MdKISS.org 1-800-370-SEAT

Safe Kids World Wide https://cert.safekids.org/find-tech

> National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:

https://www.nhtsa.gov/equipment/ car-seats-and-booster-seats





## First few car rides:

- Dress your baby in clothes that are not bulky, then
  put the baby in the car seat and buckle the harnesses
  snugly. Add more clothes or blankets OVER the harness
  to keep baby warm.
- Have an adult ride in the back seat to watch the baby closely.
- **Properly secure** any heavy items in the car such as an oxygen tank, a monitor, or other items that could hurt the baby in a crash.
- **Travel only** for important reasons, and use the car seat properly for every ride.
- Create a good sleep pattern for your baby in the crib on their back after car rides; the car seat is not another crib.
- Avoid putting your baby in swings and other seats that could cause similar breathing problems as car seats, until your doctor says it is ok.

## Car seat safety for a growing baby:

- Check your car seat manual for when to remove the body pillow or head pad, and for when and how to move the harness or buckle to "grow" with your baby.
- Expect to switch your baby out of an infant carrier car seat into a rear-facing convertible seat when the baby is about one year old, or baby's head is one inch from the top of the car seat.
- Keep harnesses snug and buckled on a child in a car seat – even when outside of the car, and never leave a child unattended in a vehicle.





