

# Are You Pregnant? Buckling Up for Two

Child  
Safety  
Facts  
2020

## Protecting yourself protects your baby in a car crash.

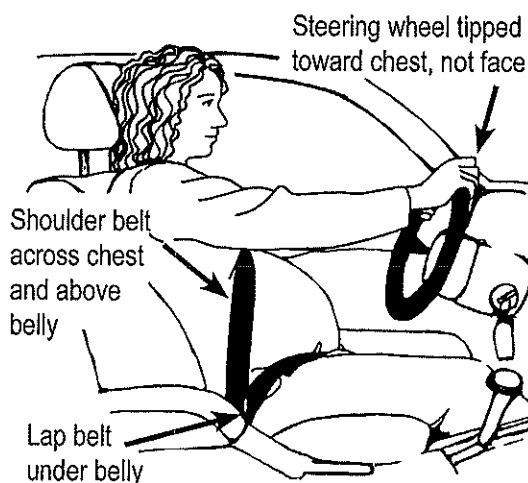
### The basics

- **Get checked at a hospital emergency room if you are in any kind of crash.** Even in a minor crash, your unborn baby could be injured. This can happen even if you don't feel hurt.
- Always use a lap-shoulder belt. It gives much more protection than only a lap belt.
- Wear the seat belt correctly. (See the drawing.)
- When driving, sit as far back from the steering wheel as you can. Tilt the steering wheel toward your chest, not up toward your face.
- An air bag will help you and your unborn baby in a crash. However, it is always best to sit far back from the steering wheel and dashboard.
- **Whenever possible:**
  - Let others do the driving, especially in the last months of pregnancy.
  - Sit in the rear seat. The center seat in back is safest for you and baby *if* there is a lap-shoulder belt.
  - Avoid travel, especially driving or riding in risky conditions.

### A car crash is one of the most serious dangers to your unborn baby.

Car crashes kill or injure more unborn babies than babies in their first year of life. There are many things you can do to keep both of you safe.

### Always use a seat belt while pregnant. Be sure to wear it the right way!



- Push the lap belt down as far as possible, below your belly. Check to be sure it stays low.
- Keep lap and shoulder belts snug. Pull up on the shoulder belt to tighten the lap belt.
- Keep the shoulder belt across the middle of your shoulder. *Never* put it behind you, under your arm, or off your shoulder.
- If you are wearing a coat, open it and pull it to your sides, out from under the belt and away from your belly. This helps the lap part of the belt stay low.

***Move the seat back as far as you can. Use both the lap and shoulder belt on every ride.***

### Other ways to protect your unborn baby

**Drive less often, if you can.** Carpool to work so you are not behind the wheel. Plan your errands so you make fewer trips. Shop online. Ask people to come to you for visits. Go by air, not by car, if you must take a long trip.

**Avoid crash risks.** Avoid driving at night and in bad weather, when possible. Never drive when sleepy or using a cell phone. Never ride with a driver who is sleepy, distracted, or has been using alcohol or drugs.

**Use a safe car.** Make sure your car is in good condition. Check your vehicle tires, brakes, and lights often. If you are buying a car, choose one with a roomy back seat that has good safety ratings for baby. Find crash ratings at [www.iihs.org](http://www.iihs.org) and at [www.safercar.gov](http://www.safercar.gov). Check any car you use for recalls at [www.safercar.gov](http://www.safercar.gov).

See other side for tips on how to use a child car seat correctly.

1.800.472.2286

NORTH  
**Dakota** | Health  
Be Legendary.™  
**VISION ZERO**

## Basics of car safety for newborns

Never ride with a baby in your arms in the car. It is impossible to safely hold a baby in a crash, even at low speed.

Plan to use a car safety seat (car seat) rear facing as long as possible. It is the best way to protect baby from head and neck injury in a crash. Also, check state laws on how baby must ride.

### Always place baby in the back seat.

The back seat is much safer than the front seat. Use the center seat in the back if the car seat fits well there.

If a baby *must* ride in the front seat, be sure the passenger air bag is off. (See the car owner's manual.)

Make sure the seat belt or LATCH holds baby's car seat tightly. Hold the car seat near the attachment belt and wiggle it. It should move less than one inch.

Buckle and tighten the straps snugly over your baby's body. Do not wrap baby in a blanket. If needed, put a blanket over the straps *after* you buckle and make them snug on baby.

Always follow car seat instructions and the car owner's manual to install and use the car seat correctly.

Practice using your car seat before baby is born. Check with your hospital or clinic to find a car seat safety class.

## Find a car seat for baby

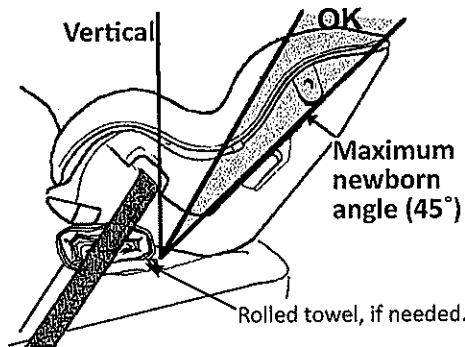
- Rear-facing-only car seats are small and must be used facing the rear of the car only. They have a handle for carrying outside the car. Most can be used with a base that stays in the car.
- Convertible car seats face the rear for a baby up to 30 pounds or more. They can be turned to face forward for an older child.
- Be sure the car seat's harness will fit baby snugly. The straps must go into the car seat at or below baby's shoulders. The lowest position for the straps should be less than 8 inches up from the seatpad.
- Use a car bed (not shown) only when a doctor says baby must ride lying flat.



Rear-facing-only seat, for a child up to 22 to 40 pounds (check label).



Convertible seat, for a child up to 30 to 50 lbs. if facing the rear (check label).



## Try the car seat in your car

Be sure it can be installed correctly in the back seat using the seat belt or LATCH strap. The car seat must recline properly in your car (as shown) and not move. Follow the instructions for the car and car seat. See *Resources* to find help.

## Planning to use a second-hand car seat? Keep in mind:

- Newer seats are often easier to use and have better safety features.
- Do not use a car seat after its "do not use" date. If you cannot find this date, do not use the car seat if it was made more than six years ago.
- If the car seat has been in a crash, it should not be used again. If you don't know for sure, don't use it.
- If missing, get instructions from the car seat maker.
- Check for recalls at [www.safercar.gov](http://www.safercar.gov).

## Resources

### National Vehicle Safety Hotline:

888-327-4236, 800-424-9153 (tty), or [www.safercar.gov](http://www.safercar.gov)

Find someone to help: 866-732-8243, [www.seatcheck.org](http://www.seatcheck.org) (select Inspection under Installation Help) or <http://cert.safekids.org> (select Find a Tech)

### SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.:

800-745-7233 or [www.carseat.org](http://www.carseat.org)

### American Academy of Pediatrics:

At [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org), select On The Go under Safety & Prevention for information on car seat models and use.

**Pack for baby's first ride:**

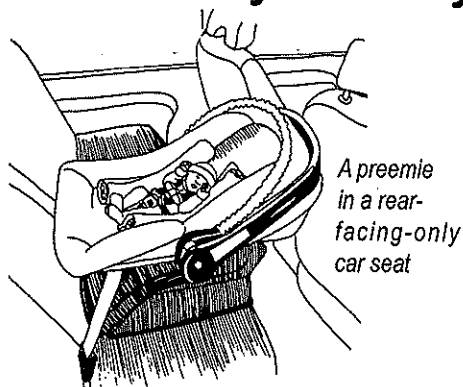
- ✓ Car seat
- ✓ Instructions for car seat and car
- ✓ Small baby clothes with legs
- ✓ Small blankets, in case you need them to pad around baby (but never under the harness)

# Car Safety for Tiny Babies

## Preemies and Low Birth Weight Babies Need Special Care

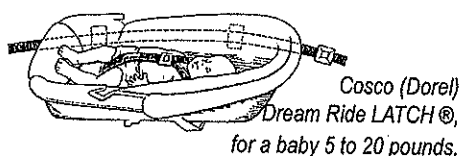
Child  
Safety  
Facts  
2020

**Make sure your baby's car seat fits his or her size and needs.**



### The basics

- Choose a car seat that is the right size and type for your baby's length, weight, and health. If your doctor says your baby should ride in a car bed, see below, right.
- ALWAYS follow car seat instructions and the car owner's manual.
- Put the harness on baby as shown in the instructions. Make it snug against all parts of baby's body.
- Install the car seat tightly in the back seat of the car.
- Baby's car seat must face the rear. That protects baby's head, neck, and spine.
- For best protection, keep your baby rear facing as long as she still fits that way by weight and height (likely 24 months or more). NEVER turn a premature baby forward sooner than one year after her **due date**.
- If using a second-hand car seat, be sure it has all parts and instructions and has not been in a crash. Check for recalls. Don't use a car seat that is too old—many should not be used longer than six years; check the label.
- Do not use a car seat as a seat in the home. Use it in the car only.



### Choosing a car seat for a tiny baby

Some car seats are better for tiny babies than others. Use a rear-facing-only or convertible car seat that fits baby well.

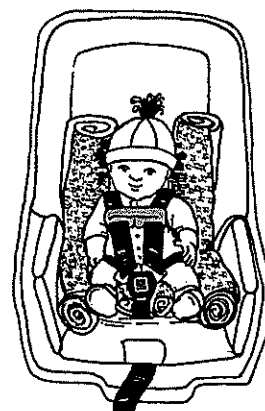
#### Look for these features:

- **A low starting weight limit.** If baby weighs less than 5 pounds, look for a car seat with a label that says it can be used at 3 or 4 pounds or "from birth."
- **A small-baby insert or pad.** Some car seats have a special pad for small babies, or one can be ordered. (*Do not* add a pad unless it was made by the car seat maker for use with your car seat.)
- **Shoulder straps that can be set to a very low position.** (See page 2 for more about harness fit.)
- **A buckle strap that can be made snug for a tiny baby.** (See page 2.)

#### Be sure the car seat fits in your car.

Try installing a car seat before you buy it, if possible.

Follow the instructions for the car seat and the car. The car seat should not move more than an inch when pushed near the belt that attaches it to the car. Follow instructions so that it reclines properly for baby.



Read instructions! They will say how to make the harness fit a small baby. Some say to add rolled blankets along the sides and a cloth between the legs to help support baby.

### Some babies must lie flat

Most babies can ride safely in a regular, rear-facing car seat if the harness fits properly (as described on page 2). However, some babies may show signs of trouble when not lying flat.

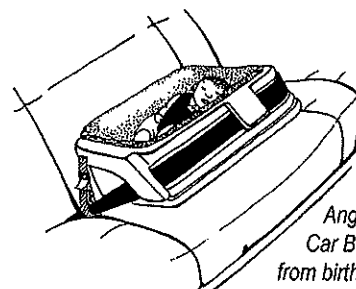
The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that **each baby born earlier than 37 weeks** be monitored in a car seat by hospital staff before going home. Staff will check for danger signs, like a slow heartbeat or a breathing problem. Ask your baby's doctor about this.

If your baby has trouble riding in a regular car seat, the doctor might say baby may ride only when lying flat in a crash-tested car bed (pictures left and right). Use the car bed until the doctor tells you your baby can sit up safely. Also, avoid using a baby seat or swing at

home during this time. (Car bed models are listed on the next page.)

#### Follow instructions and these tips:

- Install so that baby's head is toward the middle of the car.
- The doctor will tell you the safest way for baby to lie (usually on the back).



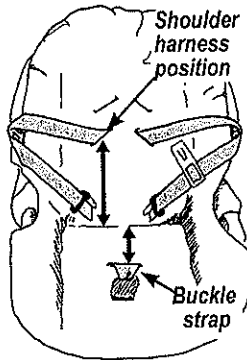
1.800.472.2286

NORTH  
**Dakota** | Health  
Be Legendary.™  
**VISION ZERO**

## Checking harness fit

Look for a harness that can be set up to fit a small body. Take a tape measure when you shop, and check the:

- **Shoulder harness:** Put the straps in the lowest position. They must go through the car seat at or below baby's shoulders. If they do not, try a different car seat. For most newborns, the lowest position should be less than 8 inches up from the bottom cushion. For tiny babies, look for one as low as 5 or 6 inches.



- **Buckle strap:** Look for one that is less than 5 inches forward of the back cushion. Many straps can be adjusted.

## Resources

**National Center for Safe Transportation of Children w/ Special Health Care Needs:** 800-755-0912, [www.preventinjury.org](http://www.preventinjury.org) (Look under Special Needs)

**AAP Clinical Report:** "Safe Transportation of Preterm and Low Birth Weight Infants at Hospital Discharge." <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/123/5/1424>

**National Vehicle Safety Hotline:** Recall and general safety questions, 888-327-4236 or 800-424-9153 (tty), [www.safercar.gov](http://www.safercar.gov)

**SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.:** Questions, recall list 800-745-7233, [www.carseat.org](http://www.carseat.org)

**Find someone to help:** 866-732-8243, [www.seatcheck.org](http://www.seatcheck.org) (select Inspection under Installation Help) or <http://cert.safekids.org> (select Find a Tech)

### Car Bed Information:

Dream Ride LATCH (Dorel Juvenile)  
Call for information: 800-544-1108

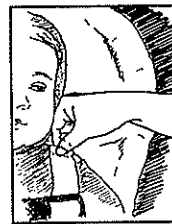
Hope Car Bed and Angel Ride Car Bed (Merritt Manufacturing)  
[www.eztether.com](http://www.eztether.com), 317-409-0148

### Distributors:

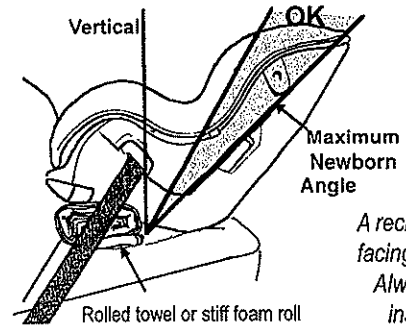
Mercury, [www.mercurydistributing.com](http://www.mercurydistributing.com)  
Prevention Alternatives, 517-927-7731,  
or email [shinn@comcast.net](mailto:shinn@comcast.net)

## Correct car seat use

- Limit time baby spends traveling.
- Do not use the car seat in the home.
- Dress your baby in clothes with legs so the buckle strap fits between the legs. It is not safe for thick clothing or blankets to be under the straps. If using a blanket, put it **over** the straps.
- Don't add padding *under* or *behind* your baby. It makes the harness too loose, so your baby could be thrown out in a crash. Do use the pads that come with your car seat. Remove them only when the instructions say you should.
- Put the shoulder straps in a position at baby's shoulders or just below. If the lowest position goes through the car seat above the baby's shoulders, use a different car seat.
- Put baby's bottom all the way back in the car seat. Don't let baby slouch.
- Place the harness on baby as shown in the instructions. Make it snug against all parts of baby's body. Test that you cannot pinch any slack in the straps (picture, right).
- Put the chest clip at armpit level. If it touches the neck of a tiny baby when placed there, move it down slightly.
- If baby needs more support, use small rolled blankets *beside* baby. Roll and tuck the blankets firmly so they do not cover the face or limit breathing. A rolled cloth between the legs may be needed to prevent slouching. (See picture on top of page 1.)
- Install baby's car seat in the back seat of the car. Use the center seat if you can get a good fit there.
- Install the car seat tightly. It should not move more than an inch when pushed near the belt. **ALWAYS** follow car seat instructions and the car manual.



Pinch test for snug straps



A reclined rear-facing car seat. Always follow instructions.

**Your baby should sit reclined—** not too flat or too upright (see picture, above). Be sure baby's chin does not fall forward, which could block his breathing. Baby's head should rest against the back of the car seat.

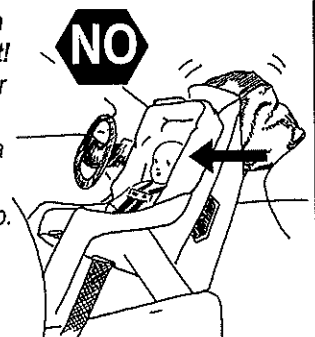
**ALWAYS** follow the instructions and the recline guide on the car seat. If it is not possible to make the car seat recline properly in your car, try a different car seat.

Some car seats have a part that adjusts to set the angle. If yours does not, you may need to place a firm roll of cloth or foam under it (picture, above).

**Note:** Breathing monitors and other heavy items must be secured so they cannot hurt baby in a crash. Use a nearby seat belt, or place items on the floor of the car.

## Dangers of Front Air Bags

**Place baby in the back seat!** An opening air bag can kill a baby in a car seat or on someone's lap.



**Baby's car seat must face the rear and should be in the back seat.** But, if baby does ride in front, the air bag **MUST** be off. Look for an on-off switch or an air bag light on the dashboard.

Learn about the air bags in your car. They protect most riders, but can be a danger to babies. Check the car's owner's manual and warning labels (such as on the car's visors).

# This Is the Way Baby Rides

## Prepare to Ride Safely With Your New Baby

Child  
Safety  
Facts  
2020

### Car seat basics

- Your baby is safest riding in a rear-facing car safety seat (car seat) as long as possible. Being rear facing protects his head and neck in a car crash. Keep him rear facing as long as he still fits the car seat's height and weight limits. Also, check state laws.
- Babies always ride in the back seat; it is much safer than the front. Use the center rear seat if the car seat fits there. If baby *must* ride in the front seat, be sure the air bag is off. (See page 2.)
- Be sure the seat belt or LATCH holds the car seat tightly.
- Buckle and tighten the harness snugly over your baby's body.
- ALWAYS follow the car seat instructions and the car manual to install and use the car seat correctly.

Pack for baby's first ride:

- ✓ Car seat
- ✓ Instructions for car seat and car
- ✓ Small baby clothes with legs
- ✓ Small blankets, in case you need them to pad around baby (but never under the harness)

#### Warning: Car Seats Are Not Cribs!

Being in a car seat for long periods of time is not healthy for babies. Outside the car, baby should spend little time in a car seat. Always keep the harness buckled whenever baby is in the car seat.

### Choosing a car seat for a new baby

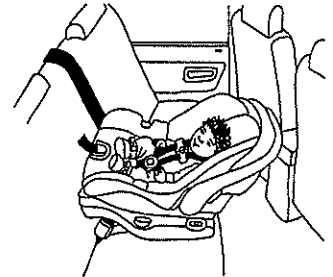
#### What is the best car seat?

The "best car seat" is one that fits your child *and* your car. For a baby, it must face the rear of the car. Read all instructions and try the car seat out before buying it. Make sure it is easy for you to use. Be sure you can install it properly in all the cars you will use.

#### What kinds of car seats fit a new baby?

Use a car seat that fits your baby's length, weight, and health. Types include:

- **Rear-facing-only car seats (1):** These are small, have a handle, and fit most babies well. If a baby becomes too tall for this type before reaching the weight limit, she can keep riding rear facing by moving to a convertible car seat.
- **Convertible car seats (2):** These are larger, but many fit new babies well. (See page two for how the harness must fit.) Convertibles face the rear for babies and toddlers. Later, they can be changed to face forward.
- **Car beds (3):** Use a car bed (not shown) only if a doctor says your baby must ride lying flat for a health reason.



1) Rear-facing-only car seats are for babies up to 22 to 40 pounds.



2) Convertible car seats can face the rear for children up to 30 to 50 pounds.

#### What features should I look for?

Consider your car's features and the needs of other riders. Be sure the car seat has many shoulder strap positions, so you can make the straps fit well now and adjust them to fit as baby grows. A pull-strap on the front of a car seat is easier to use to snug up the harness than straps on the back are.

#### How else can I plan for baby?

- Go to a car seat safety class. Call your hospital or clinic to find one.
- Practice installing the car seat and adjusting the straps. Learn more from someone trained to help with car seats. (See *Resources*.)
- If your car seat has a base, leave the base installed in the car, ready for use, while at the hospital or birth center.

#### Can I use a second-hand car seat?

If possible, use a new car seat. It will likely be easier to use, safer, and longer-lasting. If you do use a second-hand seat, make sure it has all its parts and instructions. Check it for recalls at [www.safercar.gov](http://www.safercar.gov).

Never use a car seat that has been in a crash. Also, follow a car seat's "do not use after" date. If you can't find this date on the label, do not use the car seat if it was made more than six years ago.

#### Resources

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A.: 800-745-7233, [www.carseat.org](http://www.carseat.org)

National Vehicle Safety Hotline: 888-327-4236, 800-424-9153 (tty), [www.safercar.gov](http://www.safercar.gov) (To check for recalls, click on Search for Recalls by VIN.)

Find someone to help: 866-732-8243, [www.seatcheck.org](http://www.seatcheck.org) (select Inspection under Installation Help) or <http://cert.safekids.org> (select Find a Tech)

Others: [www.chop.edu/carseat](http://www.chop.edu/carseat), [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)

1.800.472.2286

NORTH  
**Dakota** | Health  
Be Legendary.™

**VISION ZERO**

## Steps to install a rear-facing car seat

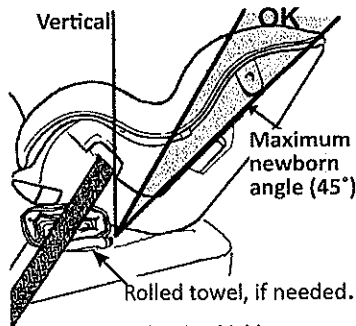
**1. Place the car seat in the back seat, facing the rear window.** The back seat is safer than the front seat in all cars, especially cars with front air bags.

**2. Use the seat belt or LATCH strap to attach the car seat. Make it tight.** If the seat belt or LATCH strap does not hold the car seat tightly, your child could be seriously hurt in a crash.

Always read the instructions that come with the car seat. Also read the sections on seat belts, LATCH, air bags, and car seats in your car manual. Do not use the lower anchors and seat belts at the same time unless both instructions say it is okay.

To check for a tight fit, hold the car seat near where the LATCH strap or seat belt goes through the car seat. Pull forward and side to side. The car seat should not move more than 1 inch. (Do not grab near the top of the car seat to check for tightness. The movement there is okay.)

**3. Make sure your baby is reclined enough** so his head does not fall forward. Always follow any recline guide on the car seat. Also, look for instructions that say how to adjust the car seat to make it recline. For some car seats, a firmly rolled towel or foam roll placed under the car seat may be needed to help it recline (A).



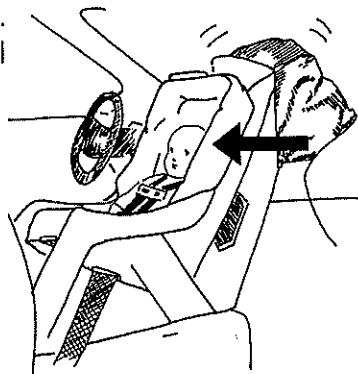
A. Baby should ride reclined. Follow car seat instructions and labels.

### Air Bag Danger: Put Baby in Back!

A baby riding in front with an air bag (B) is in danger. In even a minor crash, the air bag may open with great force—enough to kill a child. The back seat is safer for all children.

**A baby's car seat must face the rear and should be in the back seat.** If baby does ride in front, the air bag **MUST** be off. Look for an on-off switch or air bag light on the dashboard.

Learn about your car's air bags in the owner's manual. Also, read the air bag warning labels in your car.



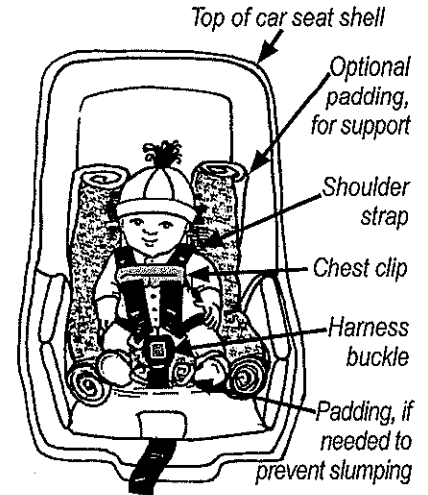
B. Warning: An opening air bag can kill a baby!

## Bringing your new baby home

**Dress baby in clothes with legs** so the buckle strap can go between the legs.

**Put the shoulder straps in a low position,** at or below baby's shoulders. Put the chest clip at armpit level.

**If baby tends to slide downward,** re-check the instructions to make sure the harness is set up for a small baby. You may need to add a small, rolled cloth between her crotch and the buckle strap (C).



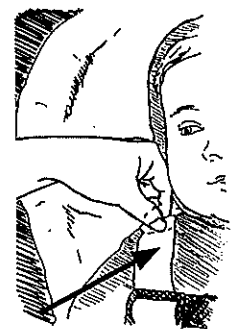
C. Parts of a car seat. Add padding (shown) along baby's sides and behind the buckle strap only if needed.

**Any support pad or insert that came with your car seat** should be used, following instructions. Do not put other padding, like a blanket or add-on cushion, under or behind baby.

**Tuck blankets along baby's sides** to support her (C), if needed. Roll them firmly so they are not near the face.

**Adjust the harness straps to fit snugly.** You should not be able to pinch any slack (D). Do not use thick blankets or dress baby in heavy clothes. They make it impossible to get the harness snug enough to hold baby in a crash. In cold weather, buckle the harness **first**, and then put a blanket **over** baby.

**Sometimes babies cry.** However, **NEVER** take baby out of the car seat while the car is moving. To hold or feed baby, park in a safe place first.



D. Use the pinch test. If you can pinch a strap, it is not snug enough.

### As your baby grows bigger

Follow instructions to make the car seat fit as baby grows. Move the harness straps up when baby's shoulders are as high as the next position. A rear-facing car seat is outgrown when:

- Baby's head is less than 1 inch from the top of the seat, or
- Baby reaches the weight limit of the car seat.

Keep baby rear facing as long as possible. This is the best way to protect a child's head and spine from injury. A baby should **NEVER** be faced forward when under 20 pounds or 1 year old.