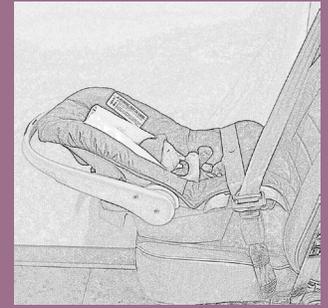


# CAR SEAT SAFETY FOR PREMATURE AND TINY BABIES

Safe travel by car of premature and tiny babies requires special care and attention. Premature babies are at a higher risk for breathing problems, especially when they are seated in a regular car seat. Tiny babies may require extra support for a safe and snug fit in a car seat. Keep your child safe by using the right car seat on every ride.



**Maryland Law:**  
*All children under 8 years old must ride in a car seat or booster seat.*

## Risks for Premature and Tiny Babies

- Premature babies (less than 37 weeks) and tiny babies (less than 5.5 pounds) may need a special car seat for the first few weeks or months.
- A “car seat challenge” should be done to tell if it is safe to use a regular car seat. Your baby will be watched in a regular car seat for a period of time. If your baby experiences pauses in breathing, a slow heart rate, or low blood oxygen when in the seat, then a car bed may be used.
- A car bed can be used until your baby grows bigger and stronger. Other special infant seats are designed for use with tiny babies.



Left: baby in car bed



Right: baby in car seat with extra support

## Tips to Keep Your New Baby Safe

- Make sure you have the right car seat or car bed for your baby. Car seat experts can help you get the right car seat. They will teach you how to safely install your car seat and put your baby in it.
- Use a car seat for travel only. Leaving your baby in a car seat for long periods of time is not safe.
- Pay close attention to your baby in swings, infant seats, slings, and other carriers. Your baby may be at risk for breathing problems if not positioned the right way.
- In a car, have an adult ride next to your baby to watch breathing and color.

## Next Steps

- Speak with your child’s doctor or car seat expert before moving your baby to the next size car seat.

## TALK TO OUR CAR SEAT EXPERT

We can work with you and your doctor to find the safest way for your baby to travel. To make an appointment with a car seat expert, call the Johns Hopkins Children’s Safety Center at **410-614-5587**.

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For more information, please contact:

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