



Don't travel without checking your child's car seat



Summer is here and so are vacation plans. You are trying to decide where you want to stay, how long the trip will last and which clothes to pack. As the date of your vacation draws near, you begin to think of more things to do and you hope everything is in place. But have you checked the safety of your child's car seat? This important task should be at the top of your vacation checklist.

When a car seat is properly chosen, installed and fits correctly, a child is much less likely to be injured in an accident. Dr. Robert Lembersky, pediatric emergency medicine specialist at East Tennessee Children's Hospital, has some tips for safe and proper use of car seats.

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Q.

Which car seat is the "best?"

A.

No one car seat is the "safest" or "best."

The "best" car seat is the one that fits your child's size and weight, and can be installed correctly in your vehicle. Price does not make a difference. A higher price usually means extra features that may or may not make the seat better or easier to use. When you find a seat you like, try it in your vehicle before purchasing it. Put your child in the seat and adjust the harness and buckles. Make sure it fits in your vehicle, and keep in mind that displays or illustrations of car seat use in stores do not always show them being used correctly.

Do not ever use a car seat that was made before 1981, has been in a crash, does not have a label with the date of manufacture and model number, does not come with instructions, has cracks in the frame of the seat, or is missing parts.

Q.

When should I use a car seat?

A.

A car seat should be used at all times, no matter how short the distance is to your destination. Use of a car seat should begin with your baby's first ride home after birth. Help your child form

a lifelong habit of buckling up. If your child weighs less than 20 pounds (regardless of age), use a rear-facing infant-only or convertible child seat in the back seat of the vehicle. If your child weighs more than 20 pounds and is not yet one year old, use a rear-facing convertible seat that is made to be used with heavier infants. Children more than 1 year old and at least 20 pounds may ride facing forward. When children reach the weight and height limit of the forward facing seat (about 40 pounds and 40 inches), they should be moved to a belt-positioning booster seat to make the adult lap and shoulder belt fit correctly.

Q.

Where should I place my child's car seat?

A.

A child's car seat is always safest when restrained in the back seat. Even after children have outgrown their car seats, they should continue to sit in the back seat of the vehicle until after the age of 12, because the back seat is the safer place in a vehicle.

Q.

What if my car has an air bag?

A.

Never use a rear-facing child seat in the front seat of a vehicle with a front passenger air bag unless the air bag has see "Car Seat Safety," page 4

Choosing a baby sitter. . .

Leaving your child with a baby sitter for the first time can be an uneasy experience. Finding a baby sitter you can trust may take time, but having confidence in your baby sitter will make the experience easier on both you and your child. Karen Stooksbury, Director of Child Life at East Tennessee Children's Hospital, has some tips for choosing a baby sitter you'll feel confident in hiring.



There are many different ways to find a sitter for your child. Your first baby sitter choice may be a grandparent, close friend or other relative. You may also ask friends to recommend the names of sitters they use and like. You might ask your pediatrician for information about local child care facilities and referral services, or find names in community newspapers, and on church and grocery store bulletin boards.

It is important to interview each candidate before hiring them and be sure to talk to them with your child present. The ideal candidate should interact well with your child, and display both enthusiasm and interest in caring for your child. Also, giving each candidate a trial run with you present offers the sitter and your child the opportunity to get acquainted before being alone together.



Once you hire a baby sitter, you should thoroughly discuss the household rules and responsibilities to ensure your child's safety as well as the sitter's. Asking the sitter plenty of questions and giving them tips on your child will help both of you to feel more comfortable about the care of your child. Be sure to cover the following information with your sitter before leaving him or her alone with your child:

- Make sure the sitter is familiar with cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
- Make a list of your child's likes, dislikes, allergies, and typical behavior.
- List the routines that your child is accustomed to; this will keep your child's schedule as close to normal as possible.
- If the sitter will be driving your child, show them the proper way to secure the car seat or seat belt in the vehicle they will be driving.
- Thoroughly familiarize the sitter on the floor plan of your house, the locks on the doors and windows, and the security alarm.



By making a point to go over these details, you will help to ensure the safety of your child while you are away from home.

"Safety is a baby sitter's most important responsibility," Stooksbury said. "Being in charge naturally requires that sitters be responsible for safety, their own as well as the child's."

When the baby sitter arrives, he or she should be made aware of any safety hazards (stairs, swimming pools, etc.), and how to operate appliances in the house.

Before leaving, parents should be very specific in their guidelines concerning rules about TV shows, telephone use and inviting visitors over. Above all, the baby sitter should have the following information:

- Where the parents are going and a phone number where they can be reached.
 - What time they plan to return.
 - The name and number of a nearby relative or neighbor.
 - Emergency phone numbers (fire department, police, hospital, poison control center, pediatrician).
- While on the job, the baby sitter should:
- Close and lock all windows and doors.
 - Pull all shades or drapes and flip on outside lights.
 - Turn down the TV and stereo so as not to muffle sounds of activity.
 - Stay awake, constantly supervise the children, and keep them away from safety hazards.
 - Protect the children from any strangers or unwanted visitors.



If the doorbell rings, find out who is at the door and only open it after an expected visitor has identified himself.

Act businesslike, recording any messages for the parents. Sitters should never identify themselves as the baby sitter, give any other information such as when the parents will be returning, or encourage further conversation.

A baby sitter in a frightening situation should contact the parents or a neighbor. If the caller or visitor is overly persistent, or if there is a serious emergency, call the police, rescue squad or hospital.

Responsible baby sitting demands that sitters be sensible about safety. Following the above guidelines will help ensure the safety of both sitters and children.

Remember: The best way to keep everyone safe is to prevent accidents and dangerous situations *before* they happen.





As a parent, did you know that ...

... two or more blistering sunburns as an infant, child or teen increases the risk of skin cancer later in life?

This year, before you open the door to let your child out to play, take a few precautions to keep his or her sensitive skin protected.

The following suggestions will help your child enjoy the summer sun without unnecessary skin damage:

● Avoid being in the sun for long periods of time between 10 a. m. and 3 p. m.; this is when dangerous rays are the strongest. If your child is outside during these hours, be sure to apply protective sunscreen or clothing. Sun protection is not only needed at the beach or at the lake, but also in the backyard; most sun damage occurs during day-to-day activities.

● One of the best ways to protect your child is to cover him or her up. Use protective clothing such as long sleeve shirts, long pants and hats to shield your child's skin.

● Choose a sunscreen with a high SPF (Sun Protection Factor); the number is found on the label. For children six months or older, choose an SPF level of at least 15. Sunscreen should not be applied to children under the age of six months, so they must be kept out of the sun whenever possible.

● For sunscreen to be effective, it must be applied appropriately. Follow these easy steps:

- apply sunscreen about 30 minutes before going outside so that a good layer of protection can form.

- don't forget to apply sunscreen on your child's lips, hands, ears and feet.

- apply sunscreen generously and reapply approximately every two hours and after your child has been sweating or swimming.

- use waterproof sunscreen if your child will be around water or will go swimming.

Also, use protective eyewear (sunglasses for children) to shield your child's eyes. Just one day in the sun can result in damage to the cornea (the outermost clear membrane layer of the eye) and cause problems later in life.

If your child is taking medication, be sure to ask his or her physician if the medication will increase your child's sensitivity to sun exposure, which could result in a severe sun burn.

If your child's skin does burn, you can alleviate pain by giving your child a bath in cool, not cold, water and using a pain reliever such as Tylenol or Motrin (never aspirin). If the child is under one year old, and has a sunburn, contact your child's pediatrician. Topical moisturizing creams may also be used to rehydrate the skin and help reduce swelling, but do not use petroleum based products or medicated creams, unless it is recommended by a pediatrician. And always remember to keep your child in the shade until all of the burn is healed.

10-Second Tip

During your child's first year, play is enhanced through stimulation of sound, sight, and touch. Using new and creative ideas will encourage your child's play.

Car Seat Safety
continued from page 1

been turned off. Side air bags, which are not required by law, provide additional protection to adults in many side crashes. However, children who are seated in close proximity to a side air bag may be at risk of serious or fatal injury if the air bag deploys, particularly if the child's head, neck or chest is close to the air bag when it deploys.

Q.
How do I know if my child's car seat has been recalled?
A.

Car seats are constantly being tested to make sure they pass safety standards, and sometimes they are recalled. When you purchase a car seat, always complete the product registration form and return it to the manufacturer. Completing and returning the registration will ensure you will be contacted by the manufacturer in case of a recall.

If you did not register the car seat or would like to verify the safety of your child's car seat, resources are available. For example, you can call the manufacturer of the car seat or visit the manufacturer's website. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission website (www.cpsc.gov) and The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration website (www.nhtsa.gov) are also good sources for car seat recall information.

Remember all children are safest in the back seat. Car seats should be installed according to the instruction booklet, maintained regularly (following the manufacturer's instructions) and adjusted to fit the individual child. Always read the car seat instructions and your vehicle owner's manual.

Sign up for a Healthy Kids Community Education Class

Kids on the Move: Promoting Your Child's Motor Development
June 19, 6:30 p.m.

Infant/Child CPR
June 26&27, 7 p.m.
cost \$15

Kids on the Move: Promoting Your Child's Motor Development
June 21, 6:30 p.m.

Promoting Your Child's Speech and Language Development
June 28, 6:30 p.m.

Promoting Your Child's Speech and Language Development
June 22, 6:30 p.m.

Keeping Your Child Safe in a Dangerous World
June 29, 6:30 p.m.

All classes will take place in the Children's Hospital Plaza Building conference rooms. To register for a class, please call the Healthy Kids registration line at (865) 541-8262.

Please note: Brandi Armstrong is the new editor of the Healthy Kids newsletter. You may reach her at (865) 541-8166.

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This newsletter is a part of Children's Hospital's *Healthy Kids* Community Education Campaign, which serves as a resource for parents, offering classes, literature and other opportunities for learning how to improve children's health. For more information about Children's Hospital's *Healthy Kids* Campaign, please call the community education line at (865) 541-8262.

Correspondence regarding the newsletter or the *Healthy Kids* Campaign may be addressed to:
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Or you can visit our web site at
www.etch.com



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