

Car seat safety tips and warnings for newborns and toddlers

When traveling in a car with kids, parents must know few important things to keep their children safe. Knowing these safety norms are important because injuries related to transport are rising in children, though many of these injuries could be prevented with precautions. Further, it must be understood that although transport injuries are uncommon in newborns and toddlers, if they occur, they are often severe and even fatal. There are also some differences in the transportation of newborns and toddler which are also important to consider.

The most important thing to know for the safety of a young one is that research has proven it to be unsafe to leave a baby sleeping in a car seat. There are many cases of serious to fatal outcomes. It usually happens due to suffocation. Car seats are not made in the right shape, but parents often leave their sleeping child on the seat, without understanding the risks. Another risk for a child when left sleeping in a car is that of heat stroke. The temperature that may feel good to adults may be far from optimal for a child. Needless to say, leaving a baby sleeping in a car is highly dangerous, and in fact, it is against the law in many states of the US. If a child of young age is sleeping in a seat, then one should take intervals and check the child more often, as research has shown that if toddlers are left sleeping in a seat for too long, it may be bad for their health.

Below are other precautions and tips to be taken, when transporting kids in a car:

- Keep the seat strap snug. Parents often leave the seat strap free thinking that it is more comfortable for their children, but this is an unsafe practice.
- Maintain the position of seat rear-facing for as long as possible; it has been proven to be safer for children from many aspects. As per recommendation, the child should be rear-facing at least for up to 2 years of age. There is a myth among parents that a rear-facing kid is more prone to leg injuries, but the research has shown just opposite.
- Check if the seat is installed properly; one must get it inspected by a certified professional from time to time. Also important is to take the winter coat off your child. Though it is quite uncomfortable for parents, seat straps are not made to be used with outer winter clothing.
- Start using a booster seat on time; once your child is above 40 pounds, use a booster seat. Usually, a booster seat is needed starting from the 6 years of age. The booster seat is required to make sure that safety belt sits at the right place on child's body. Keep using a booster seat until your child is 80 pounds; this weight is usually achieved when a child is 10 to 12 years of age.

About the author:

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Dr. Preet is a family physician, and he has been practicing medicine for last 15 years and often sees child injury in his day-to-day practice. He understands the traumatic effect of such injuries on the whole family. He is also a passionate writer.

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