

# PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN



**APRIL 2019**

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## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: SEAT BELTS



**F**amilies live busy lives, with cars being an important part of making it all come together. When children are in the car, the first thing you want to do is make sure they are as safe as possible. You can protect your children by following simple safety steps and having rules in place for car safety.

Do you and your kids buckle up for every car ride? You should! Buckling up every time your family gets in the car is the single most important thing a family can do to stay safe. More than half of teens (ages 13-19) and adults (ages 20-44) who died in crashes in 2015 were not wearing a seat belt. In fact, unintentional injury is the leading cause of death in

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# *Buckling up on every ride is the single most important thing you can do to stay safe in the car.*



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children, and more kids die in automobile crashes than in any other type of unintentional injury.

### Top tips for seat belts

- **Do not rush to move your child out of a booster seat.** The adult seat belt usually does not fit a child correctly until they are between the ages of 8 and 12, usually the height of 4 feet 9 inches.
- **Be a good example.** We know that when adults wear seat belts, kids wear seat belts. Furthermore, make sure everyone in the vehicle has a seat belt on.
- **Never buckle two kids (or an adult and a child) under one seat belt** — a crash could cause their heads to collide.
- **The shoulder strap of the seat belt should never be fastened behind a child's back or under his or her arm.** When wearing a seat belt correctly, the lower lap part of the belt should be low and tight across the upper part of the hips. The shoulder part of the seat belt should fit snugly across the chest and shoulder.

### Seat belt fit test

This test will help you find out if your child is ready for the seat belt alone. If your child does not pass the following test, keep him or her in a booster seat until he or she does.

- **Check knees and feet.** Your child's knees should bend at the edge of the seat when her back and bottom are against the vehicle seat back. His or her feet should be touching the floor without slouching.
- **Check the lap belt.** The vehicle lap belt, the lower part of the belt, should be sitting low and tight across the upper part of the hips. It should never go across the upper half of the stomach.
- **Check the shoulder belt.** The shoulder part of the seat belt should fit snugly across your child's chest and shoulder, not under the arm or across the neck or face.

Buckling up on every ride is the single most important thing you can do to stay safe in the car. Always encourage everyone in the car to wear his or her seat belt to stay safe and be a good example. In addition, remember; kids need to sit in the back seat until they are at least 12 years old.

#### SOURCES:

- <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/auto.html>
- [https://www.safekids.org/safetytips/field\\_risks/seatbelt](https://www.safekids.org/safetytips/field_risks/seatbelt)
- [https://www.safekids.org/safetytips/field\\_venues/and-around-cars](https://www.safekids.org/safetytips/field_venues/and-around-cars)
- [https://www.safekids.org/safetytips/field\\_risks/and-around-cars](https://www.safekids.org/safetytips/field_risks/and-around-cars)

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