

The Pregnant Woman's Guide to Buckling Up

Your Top 5 Seat Belt Questions Answered

Plus a quick guide to child safety seats



1. "I'm pregnant. Should I wear a seat belt?"

Yes. Doctors recommend it. In a crash, a seat belt is the best protection for both you and your unborn child.

2. "Should I adjust my seat?"

Yes. You should move the front seat back as far as possible. If you're driving, make sure that you can still comfortably reach the pedals. But always keep at least 10 inches between the center of your chest and the steering wheel cover or dashboard. As your abdomen grows during pregnancy, adjust your seat to maintain this 10-inch minimum.

Secure the lap belt below your belly so that it fits snugly across your hips and pelvic bone.

Place the shoulder belt across chest (between your breasts) and away from your neck.

Never place the shoulder belt behind your back or under your arm.

3. "What if my car or truck has air bags?"

You still need to buckle up. Air bags are designed to work with seat belts, not replace them. Without a seat belt, you could be thrown into a rapidly opening frontal air bag, which could injure or even kill you and your unborn child. Also, if you're not buckled up, you could collide with other passengers or be ejected from the vehicle.

4. "Should I turn the air bag off if my vehicle has an ON-OFF air-bag-disabling switch?"

No. Doctors recommend that pregnant women wear seat belts and leave air bags turned on. Seat belts and air bags work together to provide the best protection for you and your unborn child.

5. "What's the right way to wear my seat belt?"

The shoulder belt should lay across your chest (between your breasts) and away from your neck.

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Give your child a BOOST

4 Steps for Kids



REAR-FACING CAR SEAT

Your child under age 1 should always ride in a rear-facing car seat in the back seat. There are different types of rear-facing car seats. Infant-only seats can only be used rear-facing. Convertible and 3-in-1 car seats typically have higher height and weight limits for the rear-facing position, allowing you to keep your child rear-facing for a longer period of time.

A rear-facing car seat is the best seat for your young child to use. It has a harness and in a crash, cradles and moves with your child to reduce the stress to the child's fragile neck and spinal cord.



FORWARD-FACING CAR SEAT

Keep your child rear-facing as long as possible. It's the best way to keep him or her safe. Your child should remain in a rear-facing car seat until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by your car seat's manufacturer. Once your child outgrows the rear-facing car seat, your child is ready to travel in a forward-facing car seat with a harness in the back seat.

A forward-facing car seat has a harness and tether that limits your child's forward movement during a crash.



BOOSTER SEAT

Keep your child in a forward-facing car seat with a harness until he or she reaches the top height or weight limit allowed by your car seat's manufacturer. Once your child outgrows the forward-facing car seat with a harness, it's time to travel in a booster seat, but still in the back seat.

A booster seat positions the seat belt so that it fits properly over the stronger parts of your child's body.

Kansas law requires use of a car seat or booster seat until your child is at least 8 years old OR 4'9" tall OR weighs 80 pounds.



SEAT BELT

Keep your child in a booster seat until he or she is big enough to fit in a seat belt properly. For a seat belt to fit properly, the lap belt must lie snugly across the upper thighs, not the stomach. The shoulder belt should lie snug across the shoulder and chest and not cross the neck or face.

Remember, your child should still ride in the back seat until age 13 because it's safer for children to ride as far away from the airbags as possible.



KANSAS Traffic Safety Resource OFFICE
ktsro.org
800-415-2522

SAFE KIDS KANSAS

KansasCarSeatCheck.org

for the location of the nearest child seat inspection station.

KSA 8-1343

www.kansasboosterseat.org



NOTE: This information is available in alternative accessible formats. To obtain an alternative format, contact KDOT Public Affairs, Eisenhower Building, 700 SW Hanson 2nd floor West, Topeka, KS 66603-3754, or (785) 296-3585 (Voice)/Hearing Impaired - 711.