

## Choosing an Infant Carrier and Car Seat<sup>1</sup>

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When bringing your new baby home from the hospital or birthing center, one of the items you can't leave without is an infant car seat.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, at least five infant deaths per year have been attributed to carriers, and an estimated 13,000 injuries occurred in one year (Consumer Product Safety Commission, n.d.). These numbers do not include vehicular incidents; rather, they resulted

when "infants became entangled in restraining straps, when carrier seats toppled over on soft surfaces, such as beds, or when unrestrained children fell from the carrier seat to the floor" (Consumer Product Safety Commission, n.d., ¶ 1). In almost every case involving death, the infants had been left unattended in their carrier seat.

To prevent injury or death, the Commission recommends parents choose a carrier with a wide, sturdy base for stability. Also, always remain in arm's reach when an infant is in a carrier that is not strapped into a car, or is on a table or counter top. Remember, even infants can be very active as they explore their own movements. Never place a carrier on a soft surface, as it makes the carrier unstable. Always use the safety belts, and always buckle a car seat into the car seat belts as instructed. And, finally, do not use infant carriers as a substitute for an infant car seat.

Choosing the right infant carrier and car seat and using them properly can be the difference between life and death when driving with your infant or toddler.

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## Reference

Consumer Product Safety Commission. (n.d.). *CPSC offers safety tips for infant carrier seats*. Retrieved June 26, 2006, from <http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSCPUB/PUBS/5048.pdf>.