

# Car seats for babies

## Information for parents

### Legal requirements for car seats and child restraints

In New Zealand, all children under the age of 5 years must be properly restrained with an approved child restraint when travelling in cars or vans. The use of an adult seatbelt on its own is not acceptable. The driver is responsible for making sure children are safely restrained in their vehicle.

The law also requires drivers to make sure that children between the ages of 5 - 7 years are safely restrained if there is a car seat, other child restraint or seatbelt in the vehicle. If no restraint is available, children must be seated in the rear of the car. Drivers are also responsible for making sure that children between the ages of 8 - 14 years use seatbelts when available.

### Approved child restraints

Child restraints that have been approved for use in New Zealand will have passed one of the following standards:

- New Zealand Standard 5411
- Australian Standard 1754
- United States Standard FMVSS213
- European Standard ECE44

NZ and Australian approved infant and child seats have a tether strap which secures the top of the seat to the vehicle. This strap must be used for the seat to be safe for use.

### Safe Travelling for children

The back of a vehicle is safer for children than the front. Infants in car seats should be in the back seat facing the rear of the vehicle.

Passenger side airbags are potentially dangerous to infants and children. It is recommended those children 12 years and under should not ride in the front seat if the vehicle is equipped with an airbag.

Taxis are exempt from having to provide fitted child restraints. However, given reasonable notice, most taxi companies will provide a car with suitable child restraint. There is often a charge for this.

### Types of car seats and child restraints

The most appropriate seat or restraint to use depends on the age and size of the infant or child.

## **Birth to 6 months**

Use a car seat designed to face the rear of the vehicle for babies. Usually these car seats (capsules) go up to 13kgs.

## **6 months to 4 years**

Use a child car seat with secure buckles and straps that the child is not able to release (a 5 point harness is recommended). It has also been strongly recommended that a child is kept rear facing until around 24 months of age. (Plunket recommends rear facing up to 2 years of age). A booster seat used with an adult seatbelt may be more appropriate for bigger children from 14kgs. Although it is recommended that you use your toddler seat (convertible car seat used either rear or forward facing) until the top level/maximum weight is reached before progressing to a booster seat. Usually this is around 4 years/18kgs.

## **4-8 years**

Use a child harness or a booster seat in conjunction with an adult seatbelt. (All child restraints must be attached to an adult seatbelt to be secured and safe.)

## **Pre-school and school children**

A child should stay in a regular car seat until they outgrow it. Most children will fit a car seat until they are about 4 years of age. They are then ready for a booster seat, which is used in conjunction with a car seat belt. Car safety belts are designed for adults, so the booster seat allows the seat belt to fit children up to the age of 8 – 12 years.

## **Car Seat Rental Services**

Car seats can be hired from Plunket, other community-based organisations and some private companies. Costs and availability vary so it is a good idea to enquire and book a car seat well in advance of when you will need it. In some cases of financial hardship, the Income Support Service may be able to provide assistance with obtaining a car seat.

## **Contact details for hiring car seats and second hand baby equipment:**

### **Baby Factory Branches**

New Lynn	Phone 09 827 1310
Henderson	Phone 09 838 6500
Manukau	Phone 09 263 4850
Newmarket	Phone 09 522 0396
<u>Onehunga Mall</u>	<u>Phone 09 634 4018</u>
<u>Sylvia Park</u>	<u>Phone 09 579 8962</u>
<u>Papakura</u>	<u>Phone 09 296 5054</u>

**Baby On The Move** rent or buy baby car seats and other nursery products (cots, highchairs, buggies, backpacks, etc). Discounted rental for multiple births.

Phone 0800 222 966

## **Plunket Car Seat Hire**

### **Auckland Central District & Suburbs.**

Phone 09 620 5791 - 161 Stoddard Road, Mt.Roskill

For the Following areas:

City/Westmere/Grey Lynn/Ponsonby/Herne Bay/Newton/ Freeman's Bay/Pt Chevalier/Parnell/Newmarket/Remuera/ Greenlane/Cornwall Park/Royal Oak/One Tree Hill/Epsom/ Oranga/Mt Wellington/Otahuhu/Panmure/Ellerslie/GlenInnes/ St Johns/St Heliers/Meadowbank/Kohimarama/Onehunga/ Owairaka/Hillsborough/Three Kings/Kingsland/Sandringham/ Mission Bay/Orakei/ Glendowie/ Avondale/Mt Roskill/New Windsor/Lynfield/Blockhouse Bay/Balmoral/Mt Albert/Mt Eden/Eden North/ Rosebank/Waiheke Island

### **West Auckland/Waitakere City.**

Phone 09-837 1871

Waitakere Hospital Plunket Car Seat Office

For the Following areas:

Massey/Te Atatu/Ranui/Waitakere/Henderson/Swanson/Glen Eden/ Glendene/Edmonton/Green Bay/Waikumete/New Lynn/ Titirangi

### **South Auckland Area**

Howick/Pakuranga	Phone 09 535 1107
Manurewa	Phone 09 266 4690
Papakura	Phone 09 296 1429
Papatoetoe	Phone 09 278 3634

### **West Auckland/Rodney.**

Phone 09 412 8692

For the Following areas:

Helensville/Huapai/Kumeu

This leaflet provides a guide only. If you have concerns or want more information about your baby, ask the doctor or nurse providing your baby's care.