

Tips on Selecting An Infant Carrier Car Seat

There are quite a few different kinds of infant “bucket-type” car seats on the market but no matter what the price tag or the brand they are all tested by Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and are all safe. An infant can only use a bucket seat for a short period of time, so parents may not want to spend a fortune; still, the convenience of removing your baby while he or she is still in their a seat cannot be contested. Here are some practical features that you should look for when purchasing one of these seats.

#1 – Is the Car Seat User-Friendly?

The easier you find the car seat to use, the more likely you are to use it properly so your child stays safe. Remember, you will be using this item every day so you must be able to use it without a fuss. You should be able to visualize yourself strapping in a cranky baby with ease and also using the clasps without having to struggle with them in any way. Having an easy-to-read car seat manual can go a long way. Flip through a manual to see if you will be able to follow the manufacturer’s requirements.

#2 – Make Sure the Seat Has a Five Point Harness

Infant seats need to have a five-point harness. This means that the harness straps fan out in a star shape to restrain both shoulders, both hips and the crotch. Avoid buying a three-point harness which only comes down over the shoulders and fastens at the crotch. Consider purchasing “twist free” wide straps that have less chance of chafing your baby’s tender skin.

#3 – Look for a Car Seat With a Built-In Level

Most good quality car seats have built-in levels nowadays. Levels allow you to adjust the seat to the proper 45 degree level when it is rear-facing. This is crucial because young children need to be properly reclined for safety and comfort.

#4 – Is the Carrier Too Heavy for You to Carry?

If you are intending to use the infant seat as a carrier often, then you want to choose a light-weight model - one that you can easily lift and handle. You also want to choose one that has a comfortable handle so you can easily carry it around.

#5 – Look for Carriers With Head and Side Impact Protection

Carriers are not required to have extra head protection by law but higher quality models are lined with foam protectors (similar to the foam inside bicycle helmets) to give extra cushion. If you decide to use a carrier with minimum head support be sure to place rolled towels or small pillows to help position their head straight.

#6 – Adjusting the car seat with child growth.

Some car seat require the harness to be re-threaded with child growth and some have a simpler sliding mechanism which requires minimum effort. Look for all the positions that the harness and buckle can be adjusted to; this simplifies keeping your child snug.

#7 - Tightening the harness

A few very basic car seats have two straps on the back of the seat to tighten or loosen the harness, compared to most car seats that have one strap in the front which evenly tightens the harness. This is a feature that you will be using each and every time your child goes in or out of their seat. Definitely purchase a seat that has one strap in the front. Seat with two straps in the back are almost impossible to do up correctly in many situations.

In general, carriers that cost more are likely to be more user friendly, reducing the chances it will be used incorrectly. An incorrectly used infant carrier may not be able to prevent your child from injury in the case of an accident. However safety also depends to some extent on how well the carrier fits your car and the overall suitability for your situation.

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