

Information for Parents

Car Seat Safety Advice For your Preterm or low birth weight baby

Congratulations on the birth of your baby.

This information leaflet is designed to provide safety information regarding car seats for:

- preterm babies (less than 37 weeks)
- Low birth weight babies (less than 2.5kg)

In accordance with the current Car Safety Law within the United Kingdom all new-born babies when discharged home from hospital must be transported in a car safety seat.

The purchase of a car safety seat is a major purchase for all new parents. There are many manufacturers and designs from which to choose from. There are designs available that allow for a more laid back way of lying, although the most popular design appears to be where the car seat is incorporated into the buggy, which means babies can spend longer periods of time in their car seats.

Why is my baby at risk?

Babies who are born early (that is before 37 weeks gestation) and low birth weight <2.5kilograms (5lb 8oz) can have reduced tone which results in poor posture and causes head lag (this is when a baby is not able to support its head, the chin rests on the chest and causes obstruction of the airways). This can mean a baby may not have enough oxygen going to the brain.

What can I do to reduce the risk to my baby?

1. Car seats are for travelling in a car.
2. Keep journey to short periods of time, if you have a long journey, have plenty of breaks and take the baby out of the car seat.
3. Always have an adult travelling in the back of the car who can observe your baby for any colour change or if the baby becomes too quiet.
4. If you take your baby out for the day in buggy with car seat, take short breaks where the baby can be taken out of the car seat and allowed to stretch.
5. **A car seat must not be used as a sitting device.**
6. **A car seat must not be used for sleeping.**

**“This document is available in Welsh /
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg”.**