

# KEEP KIDS SAFER IN CRASHES



## BELT-POSITIONING BOOSTER SEATS: SAFE AND EASY TO USE

A booster seat raises your child up so that your vehicle's lap-and-shoulder belt fits correctly. This will help to prevent injuries in a crash. Your child needs a booster seat when he reaches the top weight or height recommended for his child safety seat, his shoulders are above the top harness slot, or his ears have reached the top of the seat. Children should use a booster seat until they are between 8 and 12 years of age.

### Why aren't seat belts good enough?

- Seat belts are designed to fit adults. Until your child is big enough for a seat belt to fit correctly, she needs a booster.
- Boosters help to keep your child protected in a crash. While using any restraint is better than none, boosters are better at preventing injuries than seat belts. In a crash, seat belts alone (without a booster) can cause serious injuries to your child's abdomen, neck and back.



*Backless booster with  
belt-positioning strap*

### How do you use a booster seat?

- Read instruction manuals for both the booster and the vehicle before you start.
- Put the booster in the back seat, where there is a lap-and-shoulder belt. Lap-only belts are not acceptable to use with a booster seat.
- After your child is in the booster, pull the lap-and-shoulder belt across her and buckle it.
- Check that the belt crosses her shoulder between her neck and arm and that the lap belt is low and snug on the hips, just touching the thighs.

### What type of booster is best?

- Both high-back and backless types work to make the seat belt fit better. But if the back seat of your car doesn't have a headrest or a high seat back, your child needs a high-back booster.
- Prices start at about \$15 for a backless model. Remember, just because a seat costs more does not mean it is safer.

### What should I do if my child says, "I'm too big for a car seat"?

- Let him choose his own booster seat and teach him how to buckle up.
- Show him how the booster helps him to see out of the window better and makes the shoulder belt more comfortable.
- Remember not to call the booster a child seat or car seat.
- Finally, tell your child that the car will not move until everyone is buckled in correctly.



*High-back booster*

### When is it safe to move my child to an adult seat belt?

- Keep your child in a booster until he is about 4 feet 9 inches tall, which is usually when he is between 8 and 12 years old. This is about the time when adult seat belts fit properly.
- Here's how you can tell when your child is ready for an adult seat belt:
  - He is tall enough to sit against the back of the car's seat with his legs bent at the knees and feet hanging down.
  - The shoulder belt lies across the chest, not at the neck or face.
  - The lap belt is low and snug across the thighs, not across the soft abdomen.

**LEARN MORE:**  
215-590-5437  
[chop.edu/carseat](http://chop.edu/carseat)  
[chop.edu/safekids](http://chop.edu/safekids)

*Developed in partnership with the Injury Prevention Program  
at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.*



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