

Motor vehicle injuries are the leading cause of death among children in the United States aged 1 to 12.

Many injuries happen in predictable, preventable ways.

Placing children in a car seat that is the right size for their age, weight, and height reduces serious and fatal injuries by more than half.

Motor Vehicle Crash Injuries among Children

- In the U.S., more than 1,000 children 12 and younger die in passenger vehicle crashes every year, and more than 100,000 are injured.
- In 2011 in Oklahoma, 4,288 child passengers, infant to age eight, were occupants in motor vehicle crashes. Of these, 11 were killed and 1,178 were injured.
- In a collision of only 30 miles per hour, a 10-pound baby not in a car seat will be thrown into the dashboard or windshield with a force of 300 pounds. That's like throwing the baby off a 3-story building.
- A 100-pound mother who is not wearing her seat belt and is holding the baby in her lap becomes a 3,000-pound force – more than enough to crush the child in her arms against the dash. No man or woman can continue to hold a baby in their arms during a crash, even if the car is only traveling 15 miles per hour.
- Three out of four car seats are used incorrectly.

Prevention

- Buckle your kids up for every trip; it's the law! **All children up to age 6** must be secured in a properly installed child safety seat and **children ages 6 through 12 must be protected** using a properly installed child safety seat or a seat belt. Offenses can result in fines of up to \$200.
- Children whose parents are **buckled up for every ride** are more likely to also buckle up for every ride. This practice becomes a **life-long habit** that can reduce injuries and death.
- Check the label on your car seat to make sure it is not expired and is appropriate for your **child's age, weight, and height**.
- **Consult both the car seat manual and the vehicle owner's manual** for installation instructions to ensure you install the child restraint correctly.
- Keep your child in the **back seat** at least through **age 12**. Remember even passengers in the back seat **have to be buckled in** to reduce the risk of injury in a crash.

Internet Resources

1. Oklahoma Highway Safety Office:
<http://www.ok.gov/ohso/>
2. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration:
<http://www.nhtsa.gov/>
3. Safe Kids Worldwide
<http://www.safekids.org/>
4. Insurance Institute for Highway Safety:
http://www.iihs.org/research/topics/child_restraints/default.html

Live Injury-Free!