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Infant car seat safety pointers offered

Fifty per cent of car seats are used incorrectly, reports the York Region based, Mother-To-Be Expo campaign. These mistakes can be deadly. There is something that you can do to make your baby safer. Begin by reading your car seat installation guide.

Visit one of eight GTA Mother-To-Be Expo locations near you, to learn more about how to keep your child safe in his car seat. Following, is a quick checklist of the most common mistakes that you should avoid.

One of the basic points to remember is to make sure that the child seat is not too loose in the car. Test this by grasping, with both hands, the base of the car seat, close to the vehicle safety belt opening. You should not be able to move the car seat more than one inch to either side. Fix this by tightening the seat belt and then locking the seat belt.

After you car seat is

securely positioned in the car, you'll need to make sure that your child is tightened into his car seat harness system. If you can still pinch the fabric of the harness straps between your fingers, the harness is too loose. If your child is loose in his harness, he can easily slip out of his car seat in a crash. The harness should be tight and should have no slack.

Your child should remain rear-facing, at least, until he is one year old and weighs 20 pounds. Babies need to fulfill both of these requirements, age and weight in order to become forward facing. No baby should ever be turned forward facing before his first birthday. If your baby weighs less than 20 pounds on his first birthday, keep him rear-facing until he reaches 20 pounds. This is important because the spinal cord bones are still undeveloped. In the case of a collision, an infant's relatively heavy head can catapult for-

ward, causing his still developing spine to expose his spinal cord. This puts him at risk of paralysis and life-threatening injury.

Use the retainer clip, in the correct position, at all times. The retainer clip should always be placed at armpit level or resting across your child's breastbone. When this clip is in the correct position, the shoulder straps are consequently, automatically, in the safest position. This will keep your child in the car seat, in case of collision.

Make sure your child's harness straps are through the correct slots. Most two-in-one car seats are designed with three sets of harness slots. The lower slots are designed for the rear-facing position, whereas, the top set is for the forward facing position. It is very important to adjust these straps and place them in the correct slots, to ensure the reinforcement that is necessary to keep the harness secure, in case of collision. It is best to check your manual, when in doubt about what is right for your car seat.

Many infant car seats have a built-in level that visually indicates when your seat is at the wrong angle. More often than not, seats are installed in a position that's too upright. The danger in keeping an incorrect car seat angle is that in the event of a collision, your infant's relatively heavy head could fall forward, cutting off her very narrow airway, thus impeding her breathing.

Even after you child seat is correctly installed, there are still some common hazards to watch out for when keeping your infant safe. Some rear view mirrors can present a danger to your rear-facing infant. The mirrors that suction onto the back window or attach to the

back of the car can fly and hit your baby's head, in the event of a sudden stop.

Children from 4 to 8 years of age, depending on their weight, need to ride in a booster seat. The booster seat lifts them up higher so that the car's seat belt will fit properly. Failing to be seat belted in a booster seat, could cause a child to sustain massive internal-organ damage or head and spinal injuries. This is because an adult seat belt, used by itself, crosses the child's body in the wrong areas.

Over the past decade, millions of car seats have been recalled. Check to see if yours has been recalled. If you discover that your seat has been recalled, contact the manufacturer for further instructions. Never purchase a car seat at a garage sale or

at a second hand store, since it may have been recalled or been involved in a collision.

Tips for selecting the best safety seat

Selecting the proper car seat for your child is extremely important. There are so many models, brands and styles to choose from that it can be somewhat confusing. Mother-To-Be Expo has the consumer picks Best Infant Car Seat of 2006.

Beginning Sept. 6, you can visit a Mother-To-Be Expo location to view the infant car seat display, with the information you need to help you decide which seat is right for you. Visit www.qualityoflifemedia.com or call 416-945-8315 to reserve your free seat, free gift and most importantly a fun and informative night for mother-to-be!

Registration is limited to the first 150 couples at this upscale wellness and pregnancy show, exclusive to GTA communities.

Seat Safety Check

- * Make sure that the child seat is not too loose in the car.
- * Make sure that your child is tightened into his car seat harness system.
- * Keep your child in the rear-facing position until he is one year old and weighs 20 pounds.
- * Keep the retainer clip in the correct position at all times.
- * Route your child's harness straps through the correct slots.
- * Check to make sure your car seat sits at the correct angle.

Police respond to sudden deaths

Traffic

Caledon OPP officers responded to 14 property damage and four personal injury collisions during the week of Aug. 21-28.

Back to School

As the school buses start to roll and we carry on with our familiar route to work, we must prepare ourselves once again for that sudden, unexpected stop! The summer months may have allowed us to forget to be on the lookout for the bright yellow school buses and more importantly the overhead flashing red lights.

When a school bus is stopped with overhead flashers activated, you must stop in both directions. The number of lanes in the roadway makes no difference. All vehicles, in all lanes, travelling in both directions must stop.

Failure to do so will result in a Highway Traffic Act offence, set fine of \$400 plus \$90 surcharge, totalling \$490. Accompanying the fine will be six demerit points on your driver's licence.

Theft

On Healey Road in Bolton there was a theft over \$5000.00 worth of aluminum plates.

Recovered Vehicles

A motor vehicle stolen from York region was recovered on Walton Drive in Caledon. A motor vehicle stolen from Toronto

OPP Report 1-888-310-1122

Police Services also recovered and held for examination.

Sudden Deaths

A 54-year-old man died suddenly from a heart attack in his home on Sir Lancelot in Bolton.

A 76-year-old man died suddenly in his home on Centreville Creek Road in Caledon, was pronounced at Headwaters.

Complaints

Complaints reported to Police about a female screaming for help in Albion Hills Conservation Area park were unfounded.

Two youth were left unattended for approximately half an hour. Parents were found to be sleeping. Children's Aid Society was notified.

Domestics

Allegations of Theft and Breach of Non-Harassment order were reported on Landsbridge Street in Bolton.

Domestic related - harassing phone calls on Highway 50.

Mount Hope Road domestic - wife believed to be punched by husband.



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