

Car Beds for Infants with Special Transportation Needs

Infants who are premature, very small, or have other medical conditions may experience dangerous breathing or heart rate problems when seated in the semi-reclined position of a rear-facing car seat. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that hospitals monitor premature and low birth-weight infants in a semi-reclined car seat before discharge. This test is often referred to as an “angle tolerance test” or “car seat challenge”.

A physician will determine if the infant is safe to travel home in a semi-reclined rear-facing seat or if they need to ride in a lying down position. If the infant requires lying down during travel, a car bed must be used. The types of car beds available on the market are listed below.

| Model | Weight | Height | Average Cost |
|--|----------------|-----------|--------------|
| Cosco (Dorel): Dream Ride SE www.djgusa.com 1-800-544-1108 | 5 to 20 lbs. | 19 to 26" | \$170 |
| Merrit Manufacturing: Hope Car Bed www.eztether.com | 4.5 to 35 lbs. | Up to 29" | \$1,250 |

This table does not imply product endorsement (Updated 1/2019)

Families may consult with their insurance company to determine if the purchase of a car bed will be covered or reimbursed.

The Virginia Department of Health’s Low Income Safety Seat Distribution and Education Program provides assistance to income eligible families.



TIPS

Only use a car bed when the child’s physician prescribes it as medically necessary.

Be sure to install the car bed properly by following the instruction manual.

Position the car bed so that your child’s head is toward the middle of the car, away from the door.

If possible, an adult should ride buckled up in the back seat with a very small infant and limit travel to only necessary trips.

Never put blankets or padding under baby or between baby and the harness straps.

Car beds should only be used for travel and not as a sleeping area.

Secure medical equipment by wedging it on the floor or under the vehicle seat.

Travel with a medical care plan that lists any known conditions and contact information of assigned health care providers.

Consult with the child’s physician to know when it is safe for them to ride in a traditional car seat. The physician should repeat the angle tolerance test.

Virginia Department of Health
Child Passenger Safety Program
www.safetysseatva.org
1-800-732-8333

