

Child Passenger Safety Week 2013

Child Passenger Safety (CPS) Week 2013 is September 15-21. This week is designed to bring awareness to the importance of properly restraining children in motor vehicles. The goal is to ensure children are secured properly in the appropriate seat – every trip, every time.

Car crashes are a leading cause of death for children 1 to 13 years old. As many as 3 out of 4 child safety seats are installed improperly, according to the National Highway Transportation and Safety Administration. Failure to read the child safety seat instructions, in addition to vehicle owner's manual instructions regarding installation, could result in serious injury or death.

For maximum child passenger safety, parents and caregivers can visit their local inspection station and refer to the following 4 Steps for Kids guidelines for determining which restraint system is best suited to protect children based on their age and size:

1. For the best possible protection keep infants in the back seat, in rear-facing child safety seats, as long as possible up to the height or weight limit of the particular seat. At a minimum, keep infants rear-facing until a minimum of age 1 and at least 20 pounds. Remember to never put a rear-facing safety seat in front on an airbag.
2. When children outgrow their rear-facing seats (the maximum height and weight of rear-facing seat) they should ride in forward-facing child safety seats, in the back seat, until they reach the upper weight or height limit of the particular seat (usually around age 4 and 40 pounds).
3. Once children outgrow their forward-facing seats (usually around age 4 and 40 pounds), they should ride in booster seats, in the back seat, until the vehicle seat belts fit properly. Seat belts fit properly when the lap belt lays across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the chest. Ohio's booster seat law states that all children must be in a booster seat until they are 8 years old or 4'9".
4. When children are 8 years old or 4'9" they can use the adult seat belt in the back seat, if it fits properly (lap belt lays across the upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across the chest).

Remember: All children younger than 13 should ride in the back seat and all passengers should buckle up!

Contact Emily Norris, RN, BSN @ the Hocking County Health Department @ 740.385.3030 Ext: 236 for more information or to make an appointment for a free car seat check.