

Car seat challenge

Information for families

This leaflet explains more about the car seat challenge. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the staff on the paediatric cardiology ward or the paediatric cardiology outreach nurses (contact details are at the back of this leaflet).

What is a car seat challenge and why is it necessary?

Babies who go home as part of the Home Monitoring Programme first need to be assessed to ensure that they are able to maintain their oxygen saturation levels while travelling in a car seat.

Some young babies may experience breathing problems when placed in a sitting position or car seat, including babies with complex heart conditions. Their head may flop down and restrict the airway because a newborn's reflex to keep their head held up is not yet fully developed. Therefore it is important to assess how your baby will cope when being transported in their car seat.

When and how will the car seat challenge take place?

As part of planning to take your baby home, we will ask you to bring in the car seat that they will travel in. If this is a new purchase, please keep the receipt, as you may need to change the seat for a more suitable model.

At least four days before you expect to take your baby home, the nurses on the ward will carry out the assessment. This involves monitoring your baby's breathing, heart rate and oxygen saturation levels when they are in the seat, over a two-hour period. If all these observations remain within your baby's target limits, it means that your baby has passed the challenge and will be able to go home in this car seat.

What happens if my baby does not pass the challenge?

If your baby's observations fall below the target range for them, it means that they have not passed the challenge. It may be that your baby is too small or vulnerable at this time to sit in this position. We will then check with other health professionals if the car seat can be adapted to allow your baby to be in a better position, and therefore tolerate the car seat.

The car seat challenge may be performed on a maximum of three occasions. After this time it may be necessary for you to buy a car seat that allows your baby to lie flat. The nurse looking after your baby will provide you with information about car seats. The assessment would need to be performed again in the new or adapted car seat before you go home with your baby.

Is there any other information about car seats that I should be aware of?

- Car seats should only be used to transport babies in cars, and not as a main sleeping place.
- Try to support your baby's head to prevent it from scrunching up and over, and keep an eye on their neckline.
- Where possible, two adults should accompany your baby when travelling in the car, especially on long journeys.
- You should not travel with your baby in a car seat for longer than two hours at a time. After this time you should take a break and remove your baby from the car seat for at least 30 minutes before resuming your journey.
- Babies find it difficult to regulate their temperature and quickly overheat. When in the car, remove any headwear your baby is wearing as they lose excess heat through their head.
- Be wary of thick snowsuits. It may be cold outside, but cars can heat up quickly. Natural materials will help the baby's body regulate heat rather than nylon, polyester or other man-made fibre.

Useful sources of information

Child Car Seats offers independent car seat advice and is supported by the Department of Transport.

w: www.childcarseats.org.uk

Evelina Children's Heart Organisation (ECHO) is a charity that supports the families of children with congenital heart disease who receive treatment at the Evelina London Children's Hospital.

t: 020 7998 4710

e: hello@echo-uk.org

w: www.echo-uk.org

Little Hearts Matter (LHM) is a national charity that offers support and information to families where a single ventricle heart condition has been diagnosed.

t: 0121 455 8982

e: info@lhm.org.uk

w: www.lhm.org.uk

Children's Heart Federation (CHF) is a national charity and the umbrella body for voluntary organisations working to meet the needs of children and young people with congenital and acquired heart conditions and their families.

Infoline: 0300 561 0065 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

e: info@chfed.org.uk

w: www.chfed.org.uk

British Heart Foundation (BHF) is a national charity providing information and support on anything heart-related.

Helpline: (local rate) 0300 330 3311

w: www.bhf.org.uk

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about the car seat challenge, please contact the paediatric cardiology outreach team, **t:** 020 7188 4546 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm). Out of hours, please contact the paediatric cardiology ward, **t:** 020 7188 8849.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **w:** www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets

Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline.

t: 020 7188 3003, Monday to Friday, 10am-5pm **e:** letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk
t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS website

Online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing.

w: www.nhs.uk

Get involved and have your say: become a member of the Trust

Members of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust contribute to the organisation on a voluntary basis. We count on them for feedback, local knowledge and support. Membership is free and it is up to you how much you get involved. To find out more, please get in touch.

t: 0800 731 0319 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

Was this leaflet useful?

We want to make sure the information you receive is helpful to you. If you have any comments about this leaflet, we would be happy to hear from you, fill in our simple online form, **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets, or **e:** patientinformationteam@gstt.nhs.uk

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