

January/February
Volume 4, Issue 1

Lafayette County Health Department

Special Interest Articles:

- **Public Health:**
National Child Passenger Safety Week
- **Home Care:**
Heart Attack Warning Signs
- **Hospice:**
Hospice Program Sees Growth in 2003

2004

February/March Health Day Schedule

Feb. 2 - Shullsburg
Feb. 9 -
Argyle/Blanchardville
Feb. 13 - Darlington
Feb. 16 -
Benton/Belmont
Mar. 1 - Shullsburg
Mar. 8 - Argyle
Mar. 15 -
Benton/Belmont
Mar. 22 - Argyle

Public Health

Debbie Siegenthaler, RN,BSN Director

National Child Passenger Safety Week February 9–15, 2004

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among children in the United States. In the United States during 2001, 1579 children ages 14 years and younger died as occupants in motor vehicle crashes, and approximately 228,000 were injured. That's an average of 30 deaths and more than 4,300 injuries each week (NHTSA 2002).

Of the children ages 4 years and younger who were fatally injured in 2001, nearly 50 percent were completely unrestrained (NHTSA 2002).

Most of these injuries could have been prevented. Placing children in age-appropriate restraint systems reduces serious and fatal injuries by more than half (NHTSA 2002).

National Child Passenger Safety Week occurs each year during the week of Valentine's Day, bringing public attention to the importance of safely transporting children. This year, the focus of National Child Passenger Safety Week is on the 4 Steps for Kids: rear-facing infant seats, forward-facing toddler seats, booster seats, and finally seat belts. Of course, all children ages 12 years and younger should ride in the back seat.

Using Booster Seats

Children should start using a booster seat when they grow out of their child safety seats (usually when they weigh about 40 pounds). They should continue to ride in a booster seat until the lap/shoulder belts in the car fit properly, typically when they are 4'9" tall (CDC 1999).

- **What is a booster seat?**

Belt-positioning booster seats raise children up so the lap and shoulder belts fit correctly. They require a lap and shoulder belt combination. Shield booster seats, which have a plastic shield in front of the child, offer less protection and should not be used.

- **Why use a booster seat?**

Booster seats have been shown to decrease injuries for children ages 4 to 8 when compared with seat belt use alone. During 2000, 376 children ages 4 to 8 years died in motor vehicle crashes in the United States. Of these, 46% were unrestrained and 36% were restrained in a car seat belt, without a booster seat (NHTSA 2001).



Kids in the Back for a Safer Ride

All children ages 12 years and younger should ride in the back seat, the safest part of a vehicle in the event of a crash. This is especially important for vehicles with front passenger-side airbags. Riding in the back seat is associated with at least a 30% reduction in the risk of fatal injury in cars without front passenger side airbags. Placing children in the back seat of vehicles with front passenger side airbags reduces this risk by 46%. Infants in rear-facing child safety seats should **never** be placed in a seat in front of an airbag. About one-third of children ages 12 years and younger who were killed in 2000 were riding in the front seat.

One Minute Safety Seat Checklist

Using a safety seat correctly makes a big difference. A child safety seat may not protect your child in a crash if it isn't used correctly and installed properly in your vehicle. Take a minute to **Check To Be Sure...**

All Children age 12 and under should ride properly restrained in the back seat!!!

Never place a rear-facing child safety seat in the front seat where a front mounted passenger air bag is present.



Do You Have and Understand the Instructions?

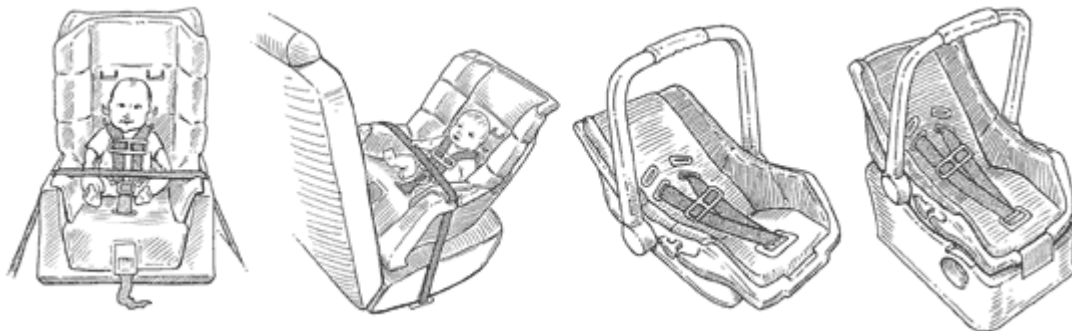
- Always read the child seat use and installation instruction manual.
- Read your vehicle owner's manual seat belt and child seat installation section.
- Harness straps should fit snugly. The straps should lie in a relatively straight line without sagging.



Does Your Child Ride in the Correct Safety Seat?

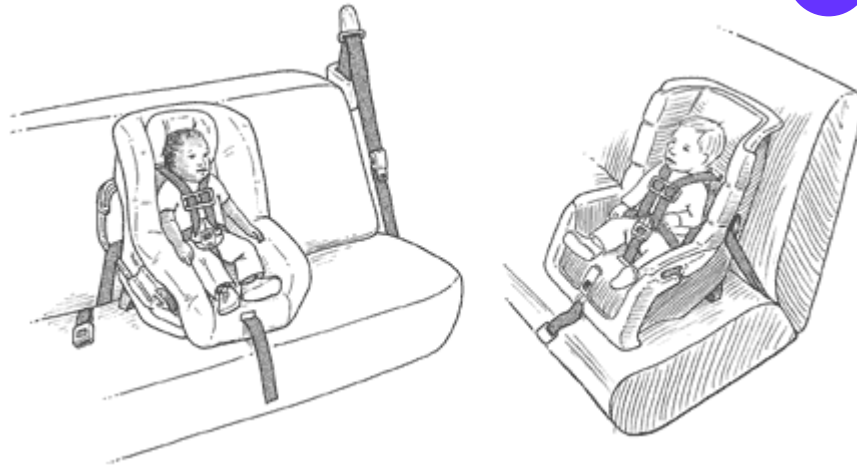
Infants, from birth to age one, and at least 20 pounds should ride in the back seat in a rear facing safety seat.

- Harness straps should be at or below the infant's shoulders.
- Harness straps should fit snugly. The straps should lie in a relatively straight line without sagging.
- The harness chest clip should be placed at the infant's armpit level. This keeps the harness straps positioned properly.
- Infants weighing 20 pounds or more before age one should ride rear facing in a convertible child safety seat rated for heavier infants (some convertible seats are rated up to 30-35 pounds rear facing).

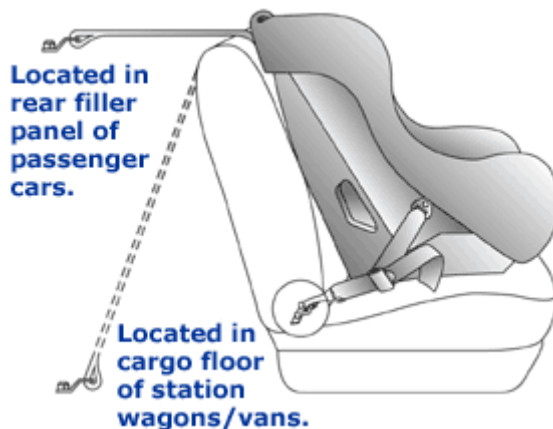


Children over one year and at least 20 pounds may ride in a forward facing child safety seat in the back seat. Children should ride in a safety seat with full harness until they weigh about 40 pounds.

- Harness straps should be at or above child's shoulders.
- Harness straps should be threaded through the top slots, in most cases.
- Harness should be snug. Straps should lie in a relatively straight line without sagging.
- Harness chest clip should be at the child's armpit level, which help keep the harness straps positioned properly on the child's shoulders.



The **L**ower **A**nchors and **T**ethers for **C**hildren (**LATCH**) System is designed to make installation of child safety seats easier by requiring child safety seats to be installed without using the vehicle's seat belt system. As of September, 1999, all new forward facing child safety seats (not including booster seats) have to meet stricter head protection requirements, which calls for a top tether strap. This adjustable strap is attached to the back of a child safety seat. It has a hook for securing the seat to a tether anchor found either on the rear shelf area of the vehicle or, in the case of mini-vans and station wagons, on the rear floor or the on the back of the rear seat of the vehicle. As of September, 2000, all new cars, minivans, and light trucks will have this tether anchor.



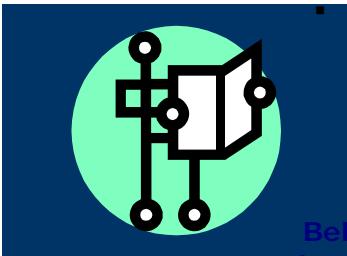
By September 1, 2002, two rear seating positions of all cars, minivans and light trucks will come equipped with lower child safety seat anchorage points located between a vehicle's seat cushion and seat back. Also by September 1, 2002, all child safety seats will have two attachments which will connect to the vehicle's lower anchorage attachment points.

Together, the lower anchors and upper tethers make up the **LATCH** system.

All children who have outgrown child safety seats should be properly restrained in booster seats until they are at least 8 years old, unless they are 4'9" tall.

Belt-positioning boosters can only be used with both the lap and shoulder belt across the child. The shoulder belt should be snug against the child's chest, resting across the collar bone. The lap belt should lay low across the child's upper thigh area.

Boosters should be used as "in between" safety devices for children over 40 pounds who have outgrown a forward-facing child seat.

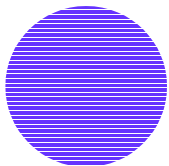
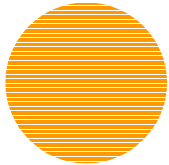
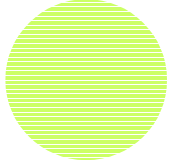


Booster seats should be used until the child can sit with his/her back against the vehicle seat back cushion, knees bent over the seat cushion edge, and feet on the floor, approximately 4'9".

Belt positioning booster must be used with a lap and shoulder belt

High-back booster with 5 point harness (used up to 40 pounds) (harness removed after 40 pounds)

High-back, belt-positioning booster provides head restraint in vehicle back seats with low backs or no head restraint. Must be used with a lap and shoulder belt.



If only a lap belt is available in the rear seating positions, an option may be to contact the vehicle dealer to see if retrofit shoulder belts can be installed. Another option may be to install products which can be used with a lap belt only such as a specialty-made harness or vest. Contact the Auto Safety Hotline at (888) 327-4236 for additional information.

Proper Child Safety Seat Use Chart

Buckle Everyone. Children Age 12 and Under in Back

	Infant	Toddler	Young Children
Weight	Birth to 1 year at least 20-22 lbs.	Over 1 year and Over 20 lbs. -40lbs.	Over 40 lbs. Ages 4-8, unless 4'9".
Type of Seat	Infant only or rear-facing convertible	Convertible / Forward facing	Belt positioning booster seat
Seat Position	Rear-facing only	Forward-facing	Forward-facing
Always Make Sure:	Children to one year and at least 20lbs. in rear-facing seats. Harness straps at or below shoulder level	Harness straps should be at or above shoulders. Most seat require top slot for forward-facing	Belt position booster seats must be used with both lap and shoulder belt. Make sure the lap belt fits low and tight across the lap/upper thigh area and the shoulder belt fits snug crossing the chest and shoulder to avoid abdominal injuries
Warning	All children age 12 and under should ride in the back seat	All children age 12 and under should ride in the back seat	All children age 12 and under should ride in the back seat

Home Care

Jane O'Brien, RN

Heart Attack Warning Signs

Heart attack is a life-and-death emergency.

If you see or have any of the symptoms below you should call 9-1-1 immediately. Today, heart attack victims can benefit from new medications and treatments unavailable to patients in year past. For example, clot busting drugs can stop some heart attacks in progress, **BUT** these drugs must be given relatively quickly after symptoms appear to be effective. So again, don't delay, get help right away.

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense—the "movie heart attack," where no one doubts what's happening. But most heart attacks start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Often people affected aren't sure what's wrong and wait too long before getting help. Here are signs that can mean a heart attack is happening:

* **Chest discomfort.** Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that last more than a few minutes, or that goes away and come back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.

* **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body.** Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.

* **Shortness of breath.** This feeling often comes along with chest discomfort. But it can occur before the chest discomfort.

* **Other signs:** These may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

If you or someone you're with has chest discomfort, especially with one or more of the signs, don't wait longer than a few minutes (no more than 5) before calling 9-1-1. Get to a hospital right away.

Hospice

Kristie Lueck, RN, BSN

Hospice Program Sees Growth In 2003

The Lafayette County Hospice program experienced a 60% increase in the total number of patients and families cared for in 2003, compared with 2002.

Statistics are shown below:

	2002	2003
Total # of Patients for the Year	25	40
Daily census-range	1-5 pt	2-7 pt
Daily census-year average	3 pt	5 pt
% of patients referred that were admitted to program	61%	73%

This increase is attributed to an increasing awareness of hospice care and the benefit it offers for quality of life in the face of terminal illness. In addition to symptom control, support for both the patient and family, and practical help, hospice care provides bereavement support for the families during the first year after the death of the patient. It can readily be seen that hospice care is a very time-intensive and people - oriented service. Dame Cicely Saunders, founder of the first modern hospice, said it best: "You matter to the last moment of your life."

For more information on Hospice:

Contact - Lafayette County Health Dept.

Phone: (608)776-4895

Monday thru Friday from 8am to 4:30pm