



"Your Local
Health Department"

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week

Coldwater, MI – Traffic deaths are at epidemic levels around the world, killing more than 1.2 million people each year, and these tragedies are expected to multiply as the number of vehicles on the road continues to grow. In fact, according to Sake Kids Worldwide, by the year 2030, traffic crashes will kill more people than HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Because of these staggering statistics, the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency is helping to raise awareness of Child Passenger Safety Week taking place this week – September 23-29.

Children are among the most vulnerable road users. "Every day, more than 500 children are killed in a road traffic collision, and tens of thousands are injured, often suffering lifelong disabilities," says Kelley Mapes, Certified Child Passenger Safety Technician at the tri-county health department. "Parents have the ability to reduce the chances of injury by taking just a few minutes before hitting the road to make sure everyone is properly restrained." Always properly buckling children in age and size appropriate car seats, booster seats, and seat belts reduces the risk of serious and fatal injuries by up to 80%. The most updated child passenger safety guidelines can be found at www.cdc.com.

Rear-facing car seat:

- For the best possible protection, infants and toddlers should be buckled in a rear-facing car seat, in the back seat, until they reach the upper weight or height limits of their seat. Check the seat's owner's manual and/or labels on the seat for weight and height limits.

Forward-facing car seat:

- When children outgrow their rear-facing seats, they should be buckled in a forward-facing car seat, in the back seat, until they reach the upper weight or height limit of their seat. Check the seat's owner's manual and/or labels on the seat for weight and height limits.

Booster seat:

- Once children outgrow their forward-facing seat, they should be buckled in a belt positioning booster seat until seat belts fit properly. Seat belts fit properly when the lap belt lays across the upper thighs (not the stomach) and the shoulder belt lays across the chest (not the neck). Proper seat belt fit usually occurs when children are about 4 feet 9 inches tall and age 9-12 years.

Seat Belt:

- Children no longer need to use a booster seat once seat belts fit them properly. Seat belts fit properly when the lap belt lays across the upper thighs (not the stomach) and the shoulder belt lays across the chest (not the neck). Proper seat belt fit usually occurs when children are about 4 feet 9 inches tall and age 9-12 years. For the best possible protection, keep children properly buckled in the back seat.

Always refer to the manual that came with your specific car seat, as specifications can differ. There is an online quiz for people to test their knowledge about car seats at <https://www.safekids.org/car-seat-quiz>. For more tips for raising a healthy family, visit us online at www.bhsj.org or like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/bhsjwic.

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