

Baby Carriers: Backpacks, Front Packs, and Slings

Back and front carriers that allow parents to "wear" their infant are very popular. For your baby's—and your own—comfort and safety, follow these guidelines when purchasing and using baby carriers.



- Infants born prematurely (</English/ages-stages/baby/preemie/Pages/default.aspx>) or with respiratory problems should not be placed in backpacks or other upright positioning devices, as the positioning in these devices may make it harder for them to breathe.
- Some sling carriers may curl your baby's body into a C-shape, which greatly increases the risk of breathing problems. If you use a sling, your baby's neck should be straight and their chin not pressed into their chest, and make sure you can always see their face.
- In any type of carrier, check frequently to ensure that your baby's mouth and nose are not blocked by fabric or your body and that airflow is not restricted. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (<https://www.cpsc.gov/Regulations-Laws--Standards/Rulemaking/Final-and-Proposed-Rules/Sling-Carriers>) warns about the suffocation hazard to infants, particularly those younger than four months, carried in infant sling carriers. When infant slings are used for carrying, it is important to ensure that the infant's head is up and above the fabric, the face is visible, and the nose and mouth are clear of anything that could block air flow.
- Take your baby with you when you shop for the carrier so you can match it to their size. Make sure the carrier supports their back and the leg holes are small enough that they can't possibly slip through. Look for sturdy material.
- If you buy a backpack, the aluminum frame should be padded, so your baby won't be hurt if they bump against it. A sunshade is also a good idea to shield your baby from the sun (</English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Sun-Safety.aspx>).
- Check the pack periodically for rips and tears in the seams and fasteners.
- When using a baby carrier, bend at the knees, not the waist, if you need to pick something up. Otherwise, the baby may tip out of the carrier, and you may hurt your back.
- Babies over five months old (</English/ages-stages/baby/Pages/Movement-4-to-7-Months.aspx>) may become restless in the carrier, so continue to use the restraining straps. Some children will brace their feet against the frame or against your body, changing their weight distribution. You should be certain your child is seated properly before you walk.

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