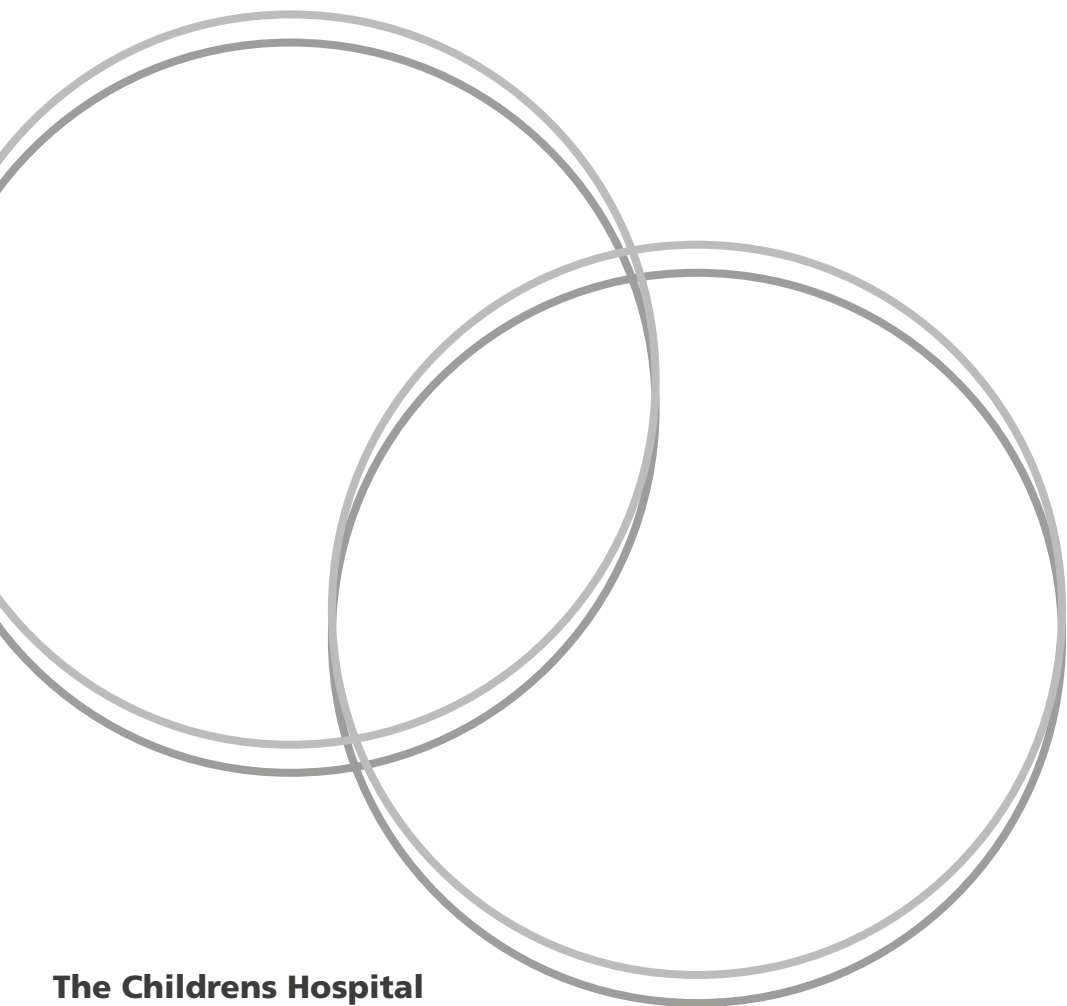




Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Car Seat Challenge

Information for families



The Childrens Hospital

This leaflet explains more about the car seat challenge. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the staff on the ward or the Children's Cardiac Nurse Specialists.

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

Babies who go home on the Home Monitoring Programme need to be assessed to ensure they can maintain their oxygen saturations 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 their airway because a newborn's reflex to hold their head up is not fully developed. It is therefore important to assess how your baby will cope when they are in their car seat.

When will the car seat challenge take place and what does it involve?

When we are starting to plan your baby's discharge we will ask you to bring in the car seat that they will travel in. If this is a new purchase, then please keep the receipt if possible as it may be necessary for you to change the seat for a more suitable model.

The nurses on the ward will carry out the assessment ideally a few days before you are due to go home. This involves monitoring your baby's breathing, heart rate and oxygen saturation levels when they are in the seat over 90 minutes. If all these observations remain within your baby's target range, then your baby has passed the challenge and will be able to go home in their car seat.

What happens if my baby does not pass the challenge?

If your baby's observations fall below their target range it means 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. If this happens, we will check with other health professionals to see if the car seat can be adapted to allow your baby to be in a better position and therefore able to pass the challenge.

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 assessment would need to be passed in the new or adapted car seat before you can 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 in a pushchair or as a seat.
- Try to support your baby's head to prevent it from flopping forwards.
- Where possible two adults should accompany your baby when travelling in a 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 a 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 as this will allow them to lose excess heat through their head.
- Be wary of thick snow suits. It may be cold outside, but cars heat up quickly. Natural materials will help your baby's body regulate heat more easily than nylon, polyester or other man-made fibre.

Useful sources of information

RoSPA Child car safety website

Website: www.childcarseats.org.uk

Little Hearts Matter (LHM)

A national charity that offers support and information to families where a single ventricle heart condition has been diagnosed.

Website: www.lhm.org.uk

Email: info@lhm.org.uk

Telephone: 01214 558 982

British Heart Foundation (BHF)

A national charity providing information and support for families who have a child where a heart condition has been diagnosed.

Website: www.bhf.org.uk

Telephone: 0300 330 3311

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about the car seat challenge, please contact:

Children's Cardiac Nurse Specialists

Telephone: 01865 234 985

Email: orh-tr.ccnsoxford@nhs.net

We are available Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Outside of these hours, you can contact:

Bellhouse / Drayson Ward: 01865 231 248

Oxford University Hospitals Switchboard

Telephone: 0300 304 7777

How to give feedback about your experience?

We would like to hear about your experience with our Childrens' Services.

Please ask for a paper survey to be filled in or respond to the feedback text message.

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
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