

infant restraints can be recliners, they are used in the car only in the position specified by the manufacturer. In 2014, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration changed the LATCH system rule, which now states if the combined weight of the child and the car seat is more than 65 pounds, parents will be instructed to use the shoulder-lap belt restraint to restrain the child in the car seat instead of relying on the LATCH system for maximum protection.

Severe injuries and deaths in children have occurred from air bags deploying on impact in the front passenger seat. The back seat is the safest area of the car for children. For restraints to be effective, they must be used properly. Dressing the infant in an outfit with sleeves and legs allows the harness to hold the child securely in the seat. A small blanket or towel rolled tightly can be placed on either side of the head to minimize movement and keep the infant's hips against the back of the seat. Padding between the infant's legs and crotch is added to prevent slouching. Thick, soft padding is not placed under the infant or behind the back because during the impact, the padding will compress, leaving the harness straps loose. Preterm infants being discharged home from the hospital should be placed in appropriate car seat restraints as they would be placed in the car prior to discharge, and their heart rate and oxygen saturation should be monitored for 90 to 120 minutes to detect any potential problems with airway occlusion. (For further discussion of car seat restraints, see [Chapter 11](#).)

### **Nursing Alert**

Rear-facing infant safety seats must not be placed in the front seats of cars equipped with an air bag on the passenger side. If an infant safety seat is placed in the passenger seat with an air bag, the child could be seriously injured if the air bag is released because rear-facing infant seats extend closer to the dashboard.

### **Nurse's Role in Injury Prevention**

The task of injury prevention begins to be appreciated only when the potential environmental dangers to which infants are vulnerable are considered. Injury prevention and parent education should be handled on a growth and developmental basis. It is